

MARVEL

VOL
5

THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST



ESCAPE FROM THE EIGHTH CITY

SWIERCZYNSKI • GREEN II • DOE • FOREMAN • KANO • ZONJIC

THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST

ESCAPE FROM THE EIGHTH CITY

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The Story of the Iron Fist Li Park: The Reluctant Weapon
Vs. Unstoppable Forces of Evil

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Wah Sing-Rand and The Mandate of Heaven

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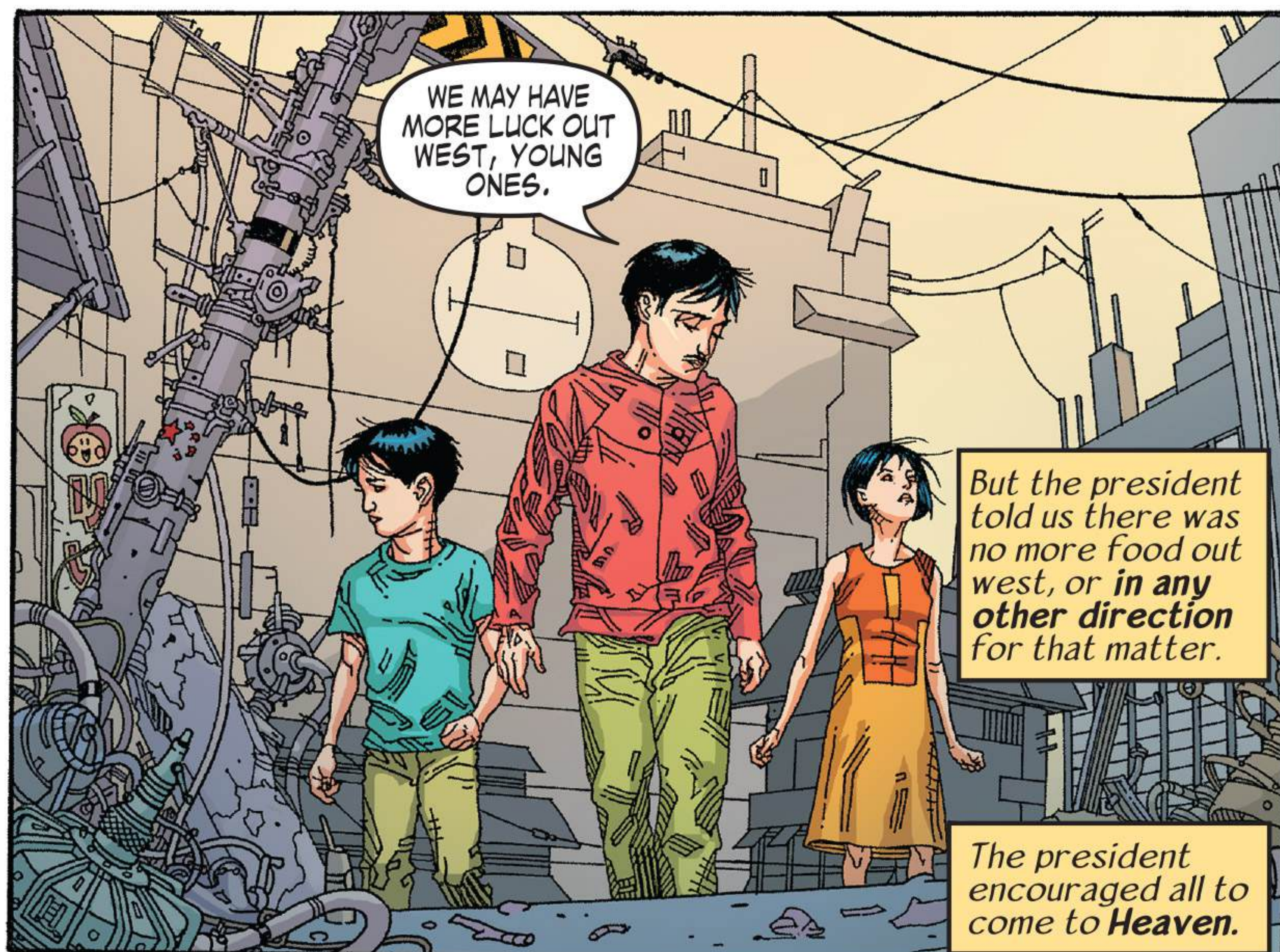
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IRON FIST

Planet Yaochi,
Alpha Centauri System.

Day 17,
Twelfth Month,
Wu Yin Year.

Today Father told us
there was no more
food, and we'd have
to leave home.



WE MAY HAVE
MORE LUCK OUT
WEST, YOUNG
ONES.

But the president
told us there was
no more food out
west, or **in any
other direction**
for that matter.

The president
encouraged all to
come to **Heaven**.

My name is
Min. I am the
last child born
to my Father.

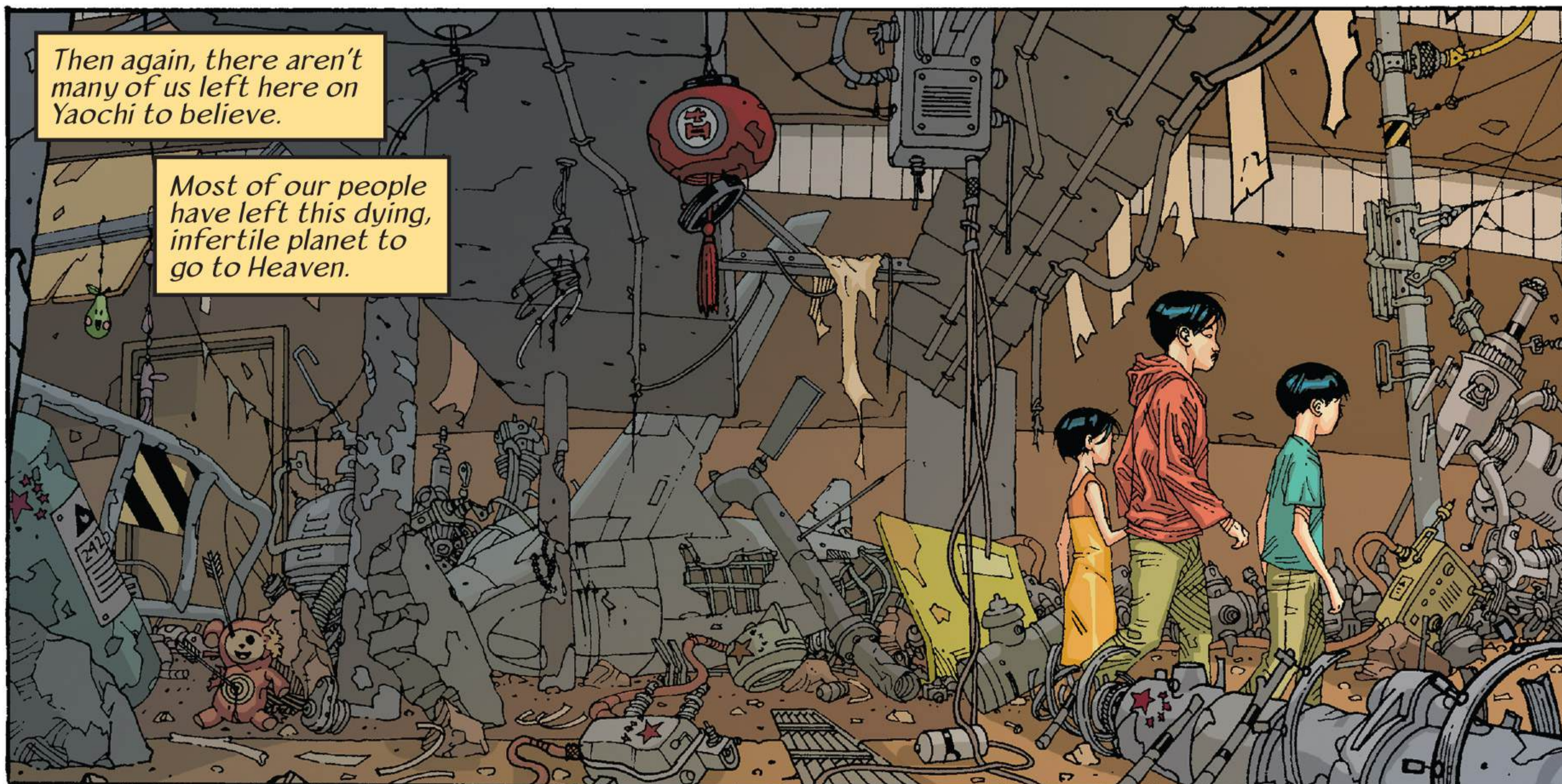
We are the last Chinese
in the universe, 4.3 light
years from Earth where
my ancestors were born.

There are no more
Chinese left on Earth.
In fact, there is no
one left on Earth at all.

But Father clings to a
prophecy that help is on
the way, even when no one
else seems to anymore.

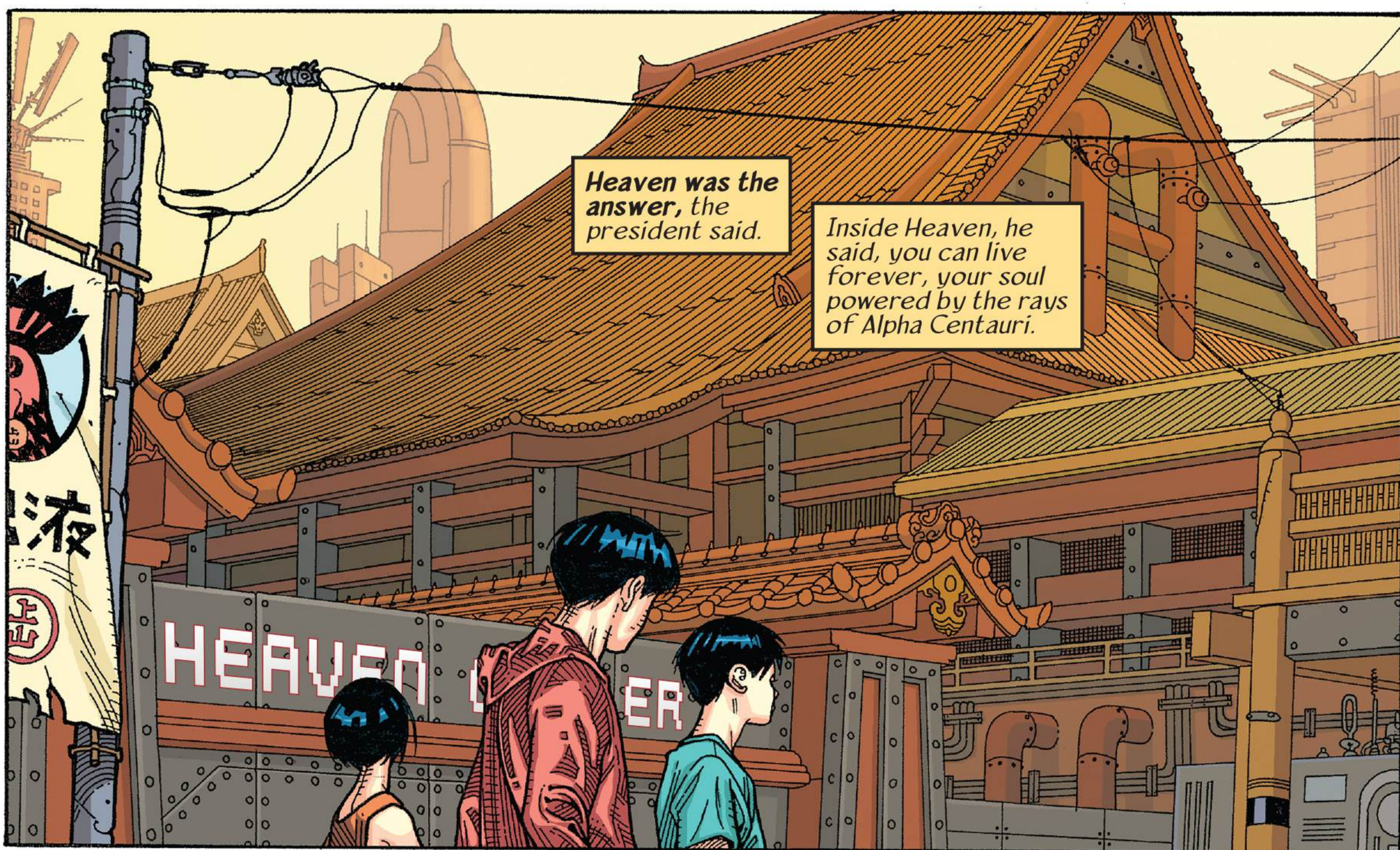
He awaits a **hero**
from the **skies**
who will deliver
us from tyranny.

Maybe the hero is
stuck up there, in
all of the garbage.



Then again, there aren't many of us left here on Yaochi to believe.

Most of our people have left this dying, infertile planet to go to Heaven.



Heaven was the answer, the president said.

Inside Heaven, he said, you can live forever, your soul powered by the rays of Alpha Centauri.



Inside Heaven, you commune with those long since gone.

There are no failed crops. No water shortages. No disease. No war. No greed. No envy.

It is Heaven. It is what people spend their entire lives searching for.



All you have to give, in return, is your physical limitations.

And allow your mind to be uploaded to Heaven.

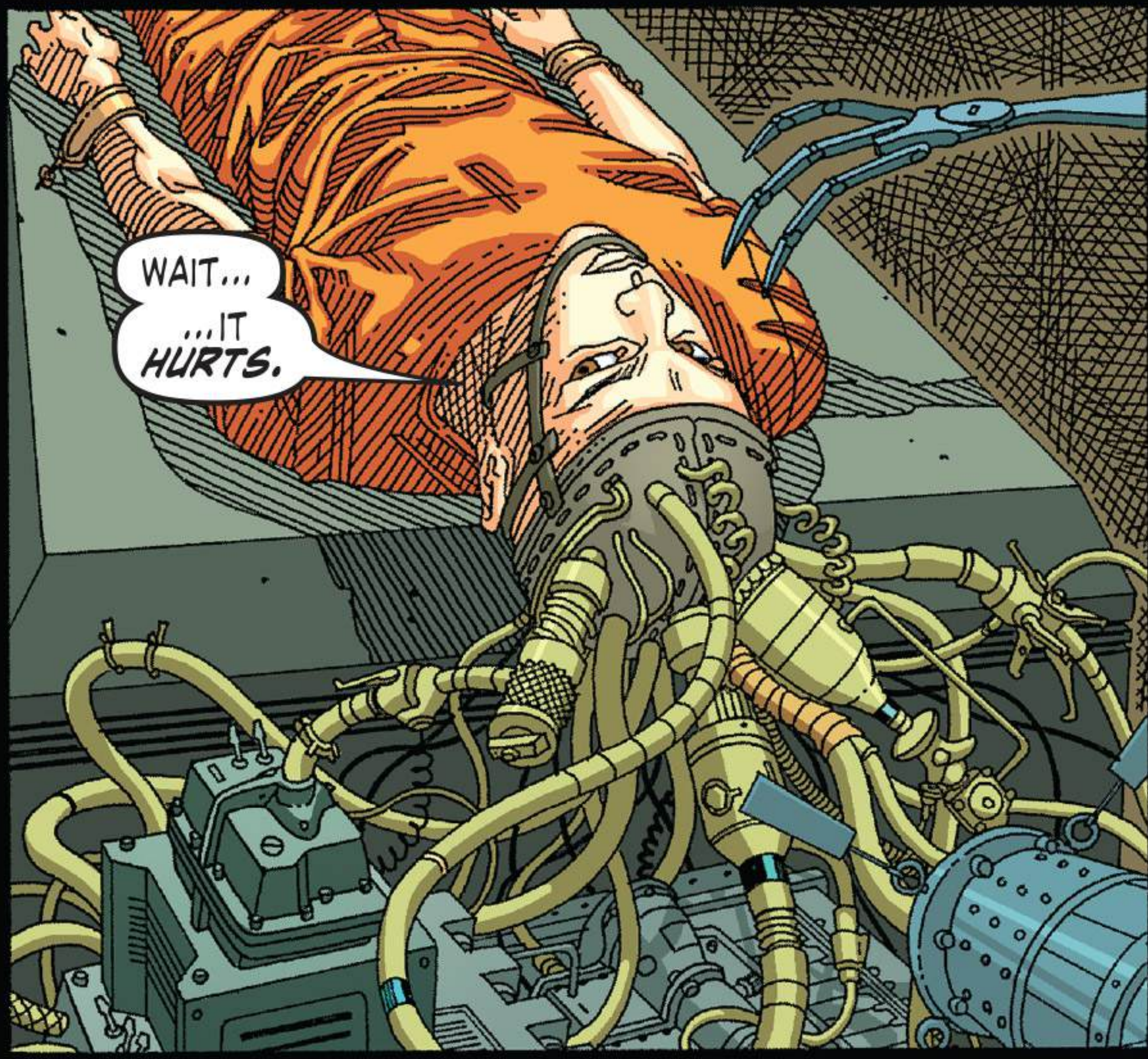


But I know what **really** happens in the Center of Heaven.

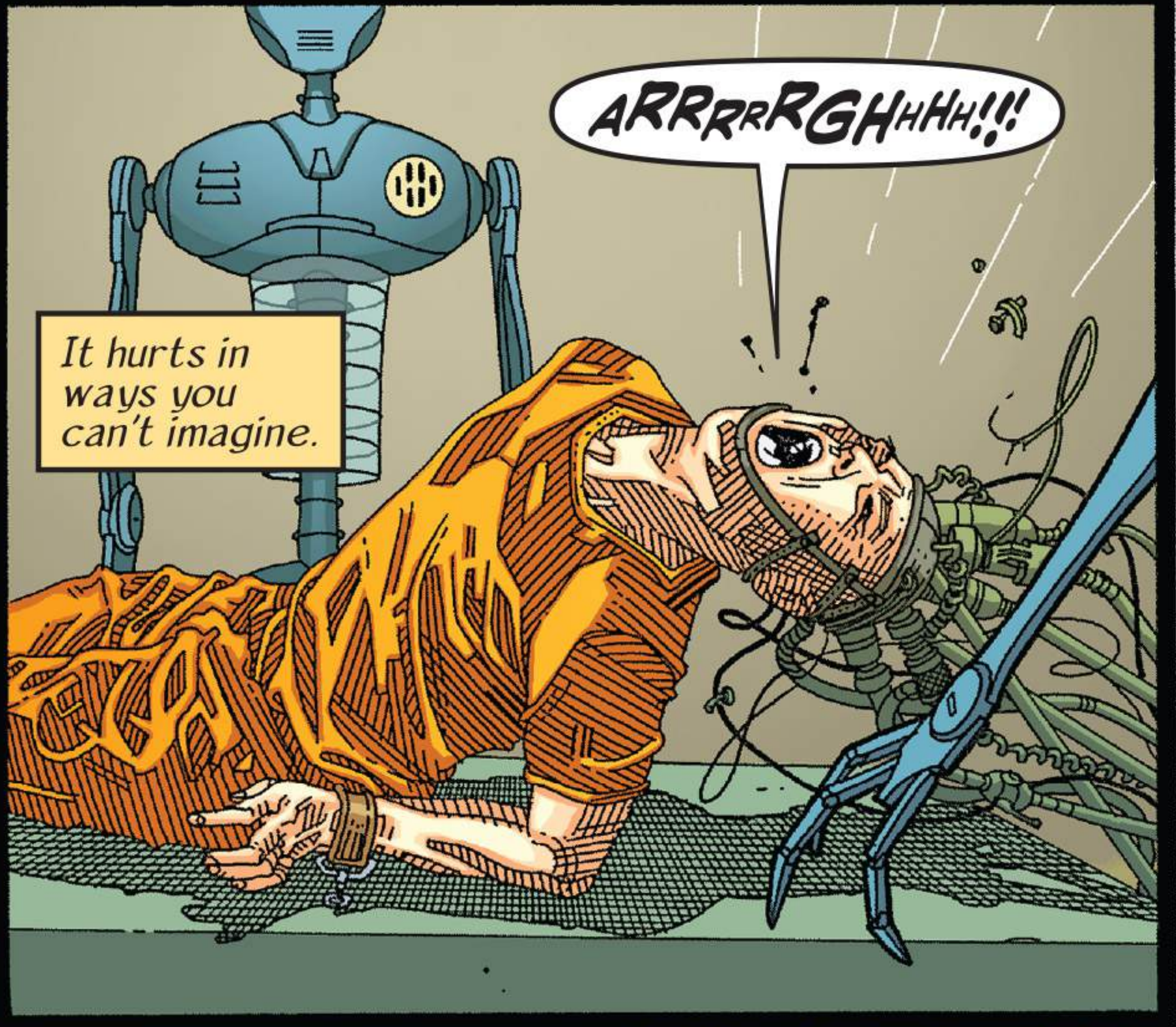
Father used to work there, and **stumbled** across something he wasn't supposed to know.



WELCOME, CITIZEN.



WAIT...
...IT HURTS.



ARRRRRGHHHH!!!

It hurts in ways you can't imagine.



In those last minutes, your mind struggles to hold on to your body. It knows this is **wrong**...

...but it is powerless
to stop your body from
being **repurposed**.

Organs are liquefied,
used as **bio-oil** to keep
the machinery lubricated.

Even the bones
are separated,
ground to paste,
then recycled as
circuit boards.

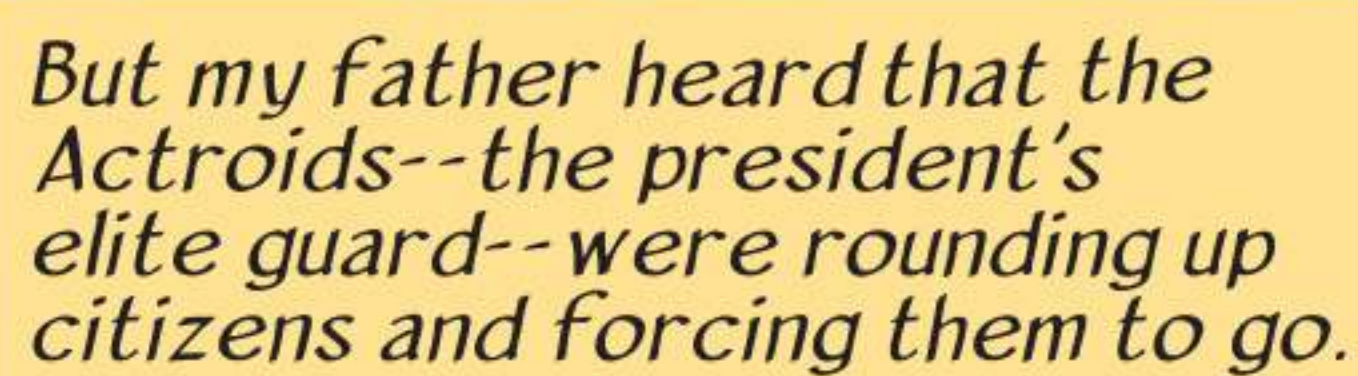
However,
this is not
the worst
of it.

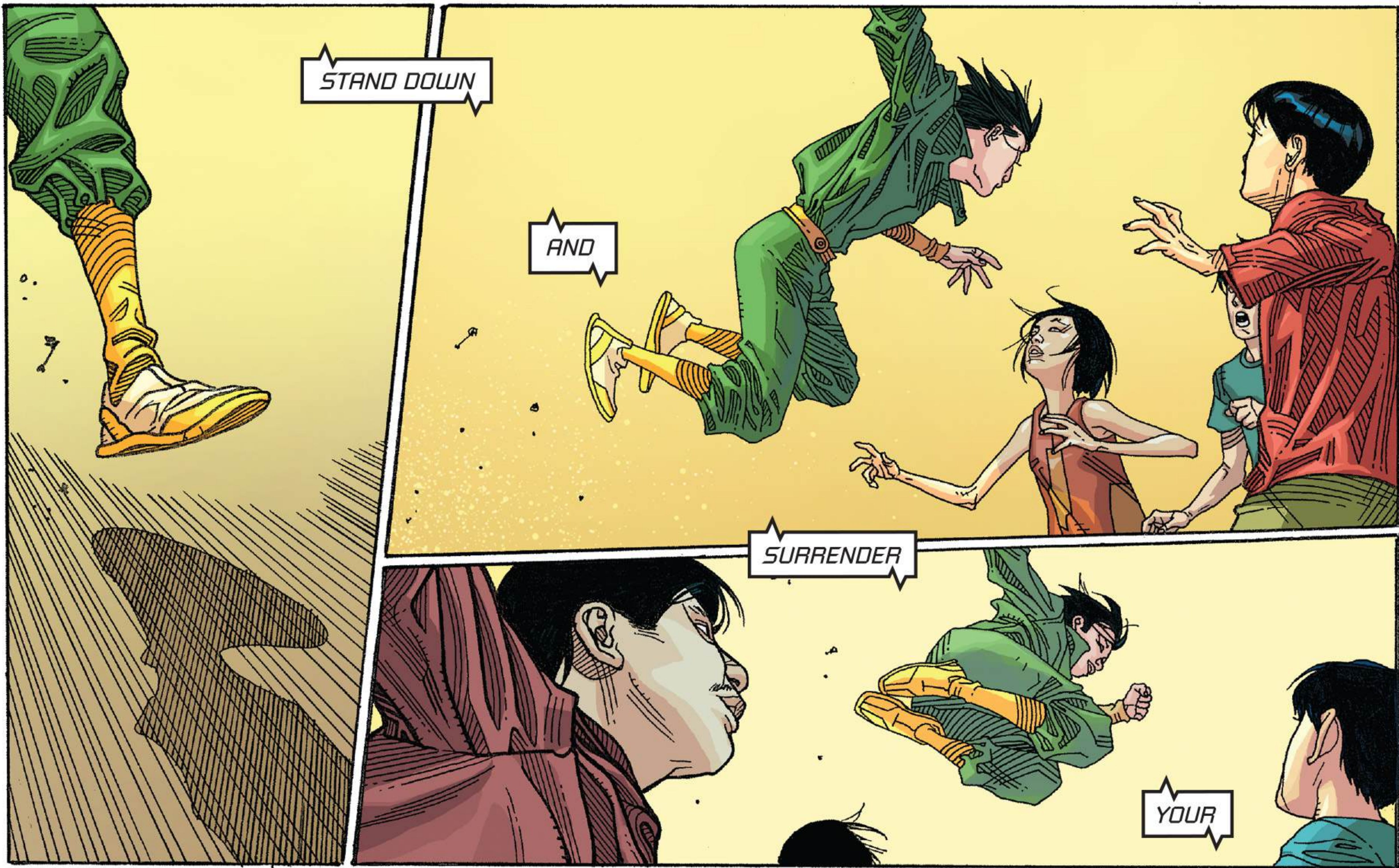
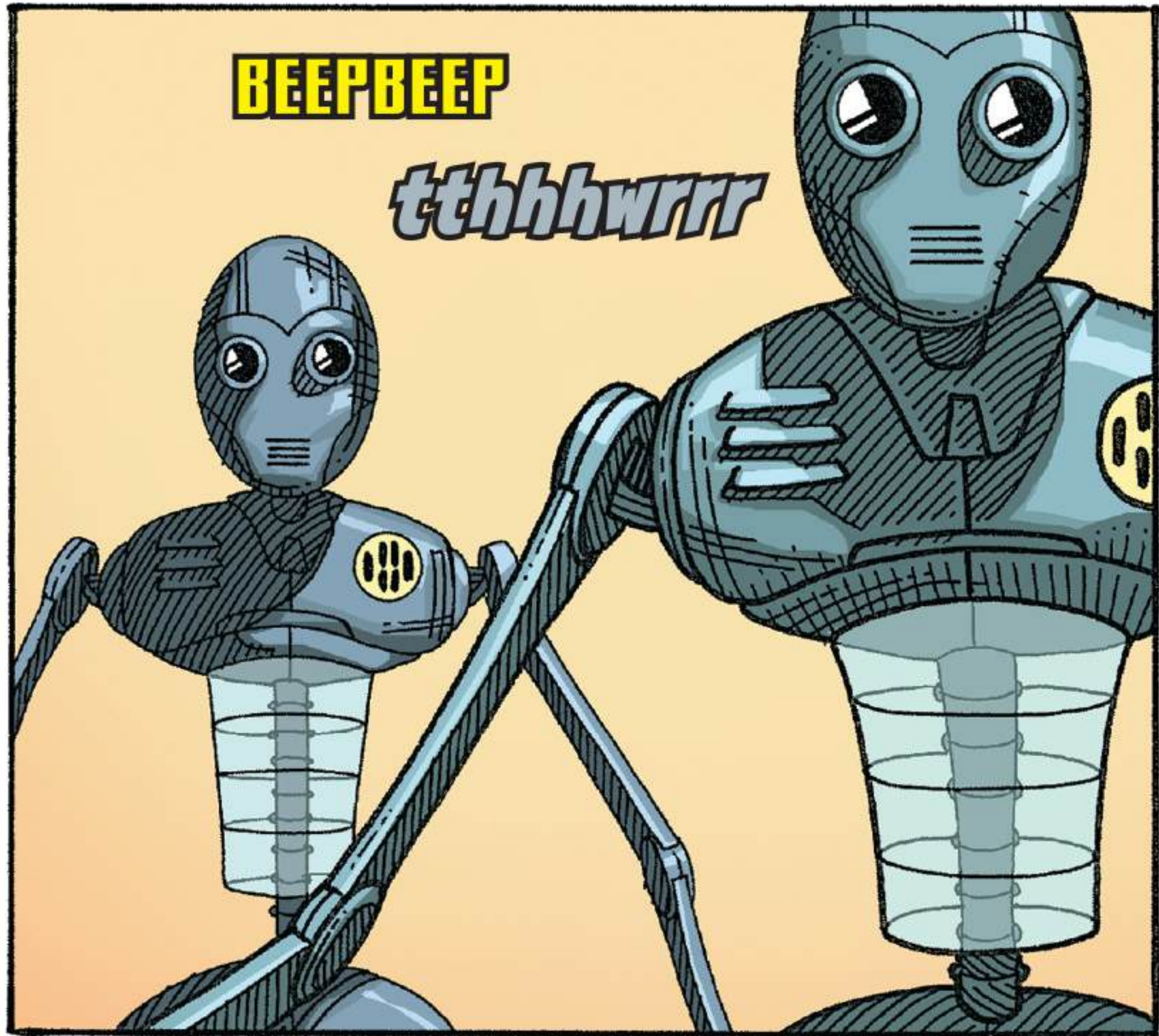
The worst is what
Father discovered
while helping care
for the machines
of Heaven.

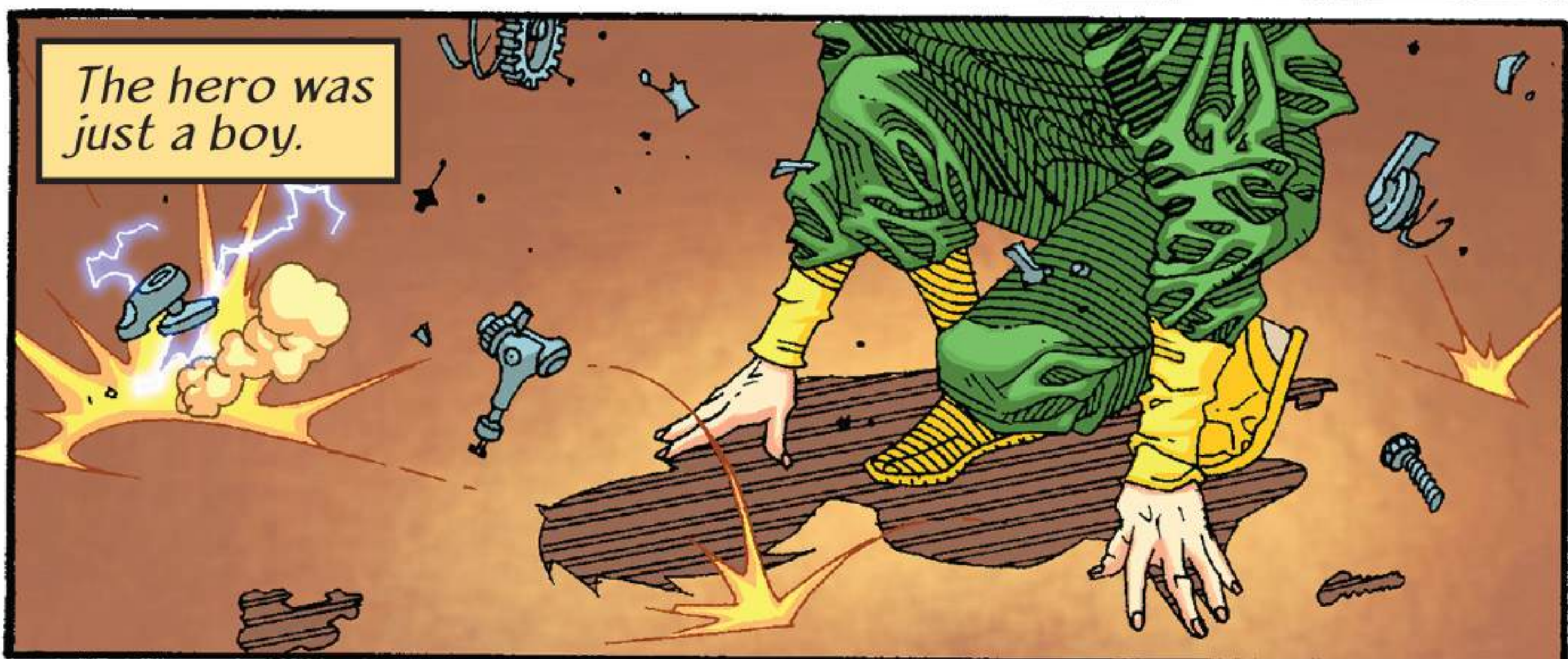
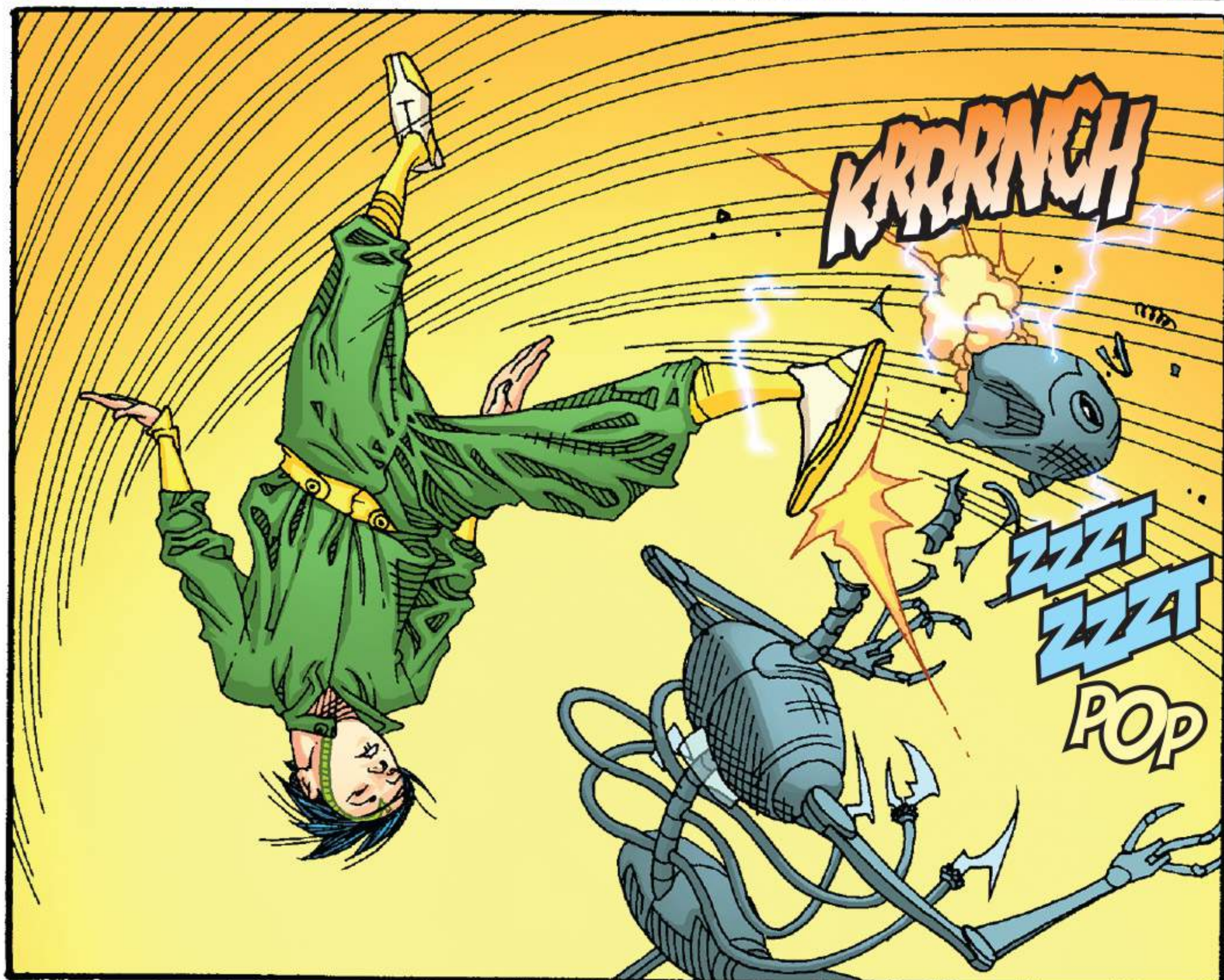
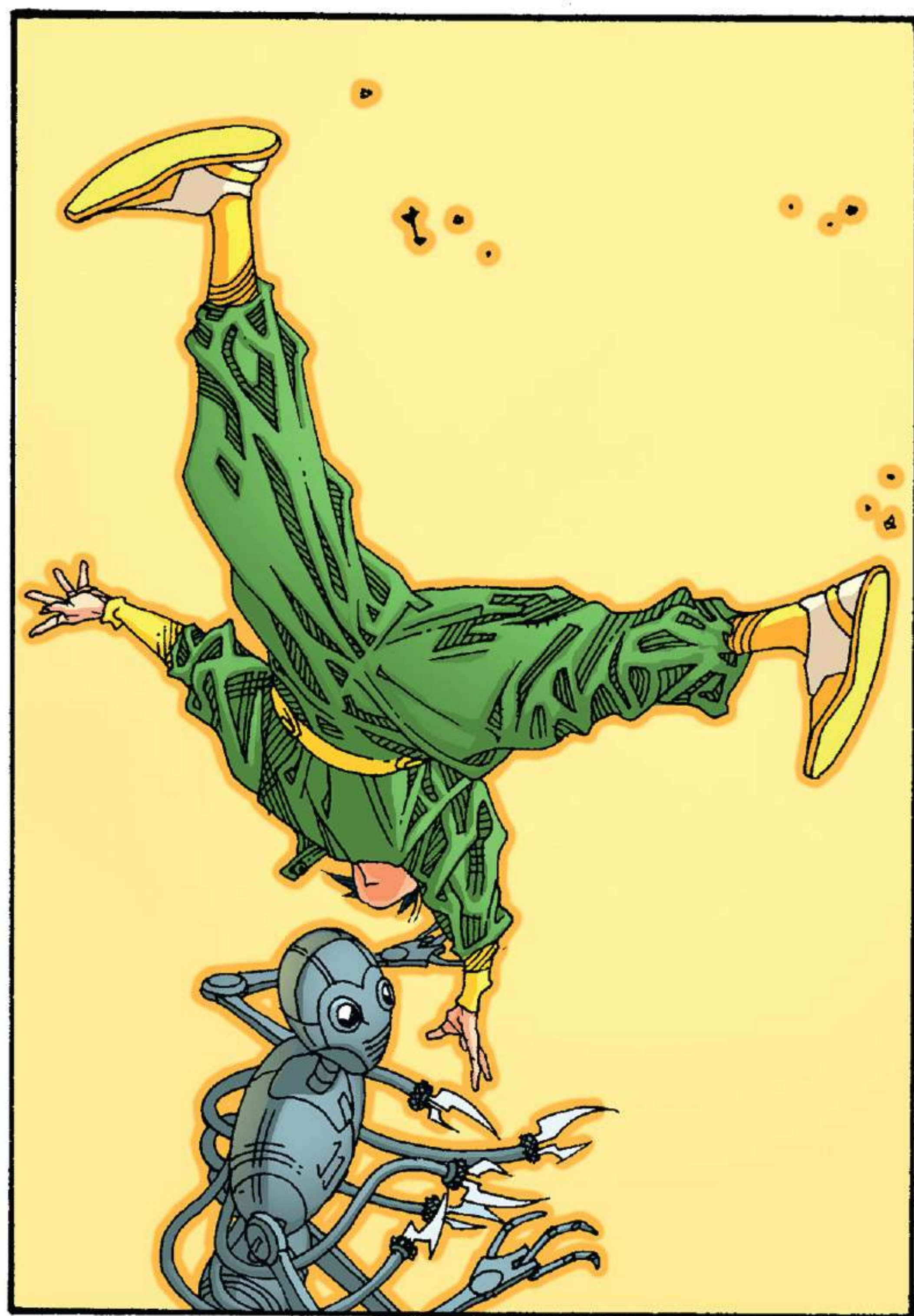
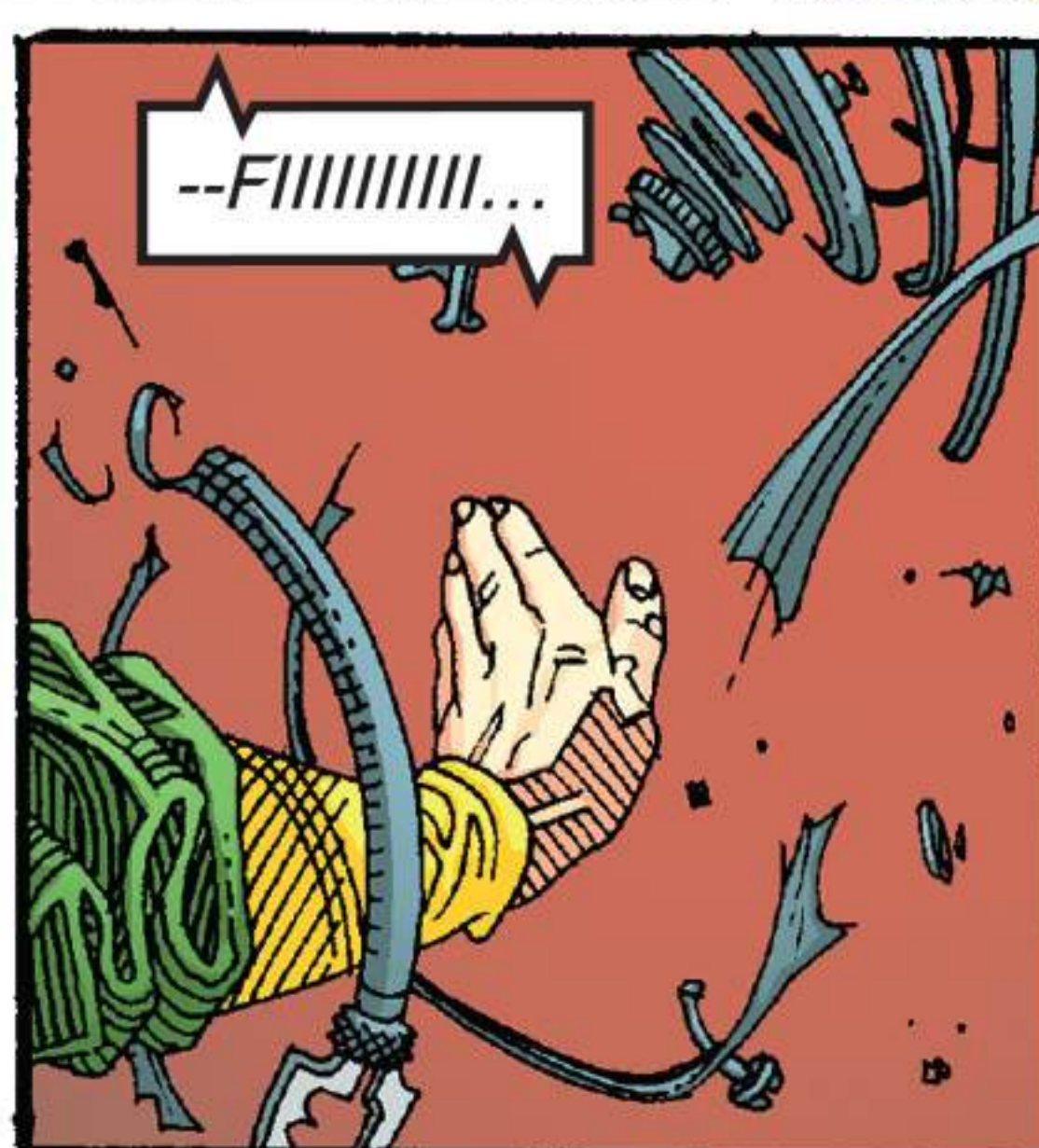
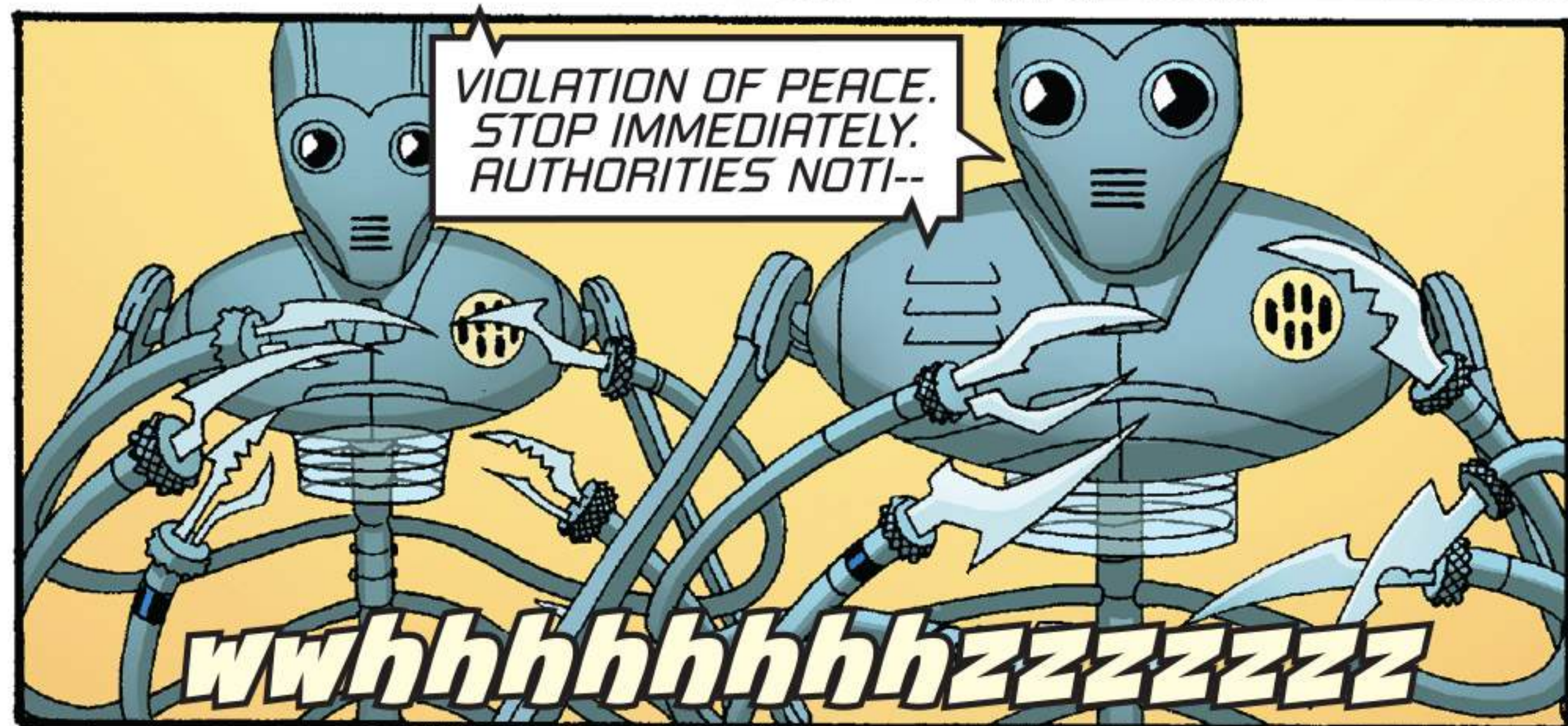
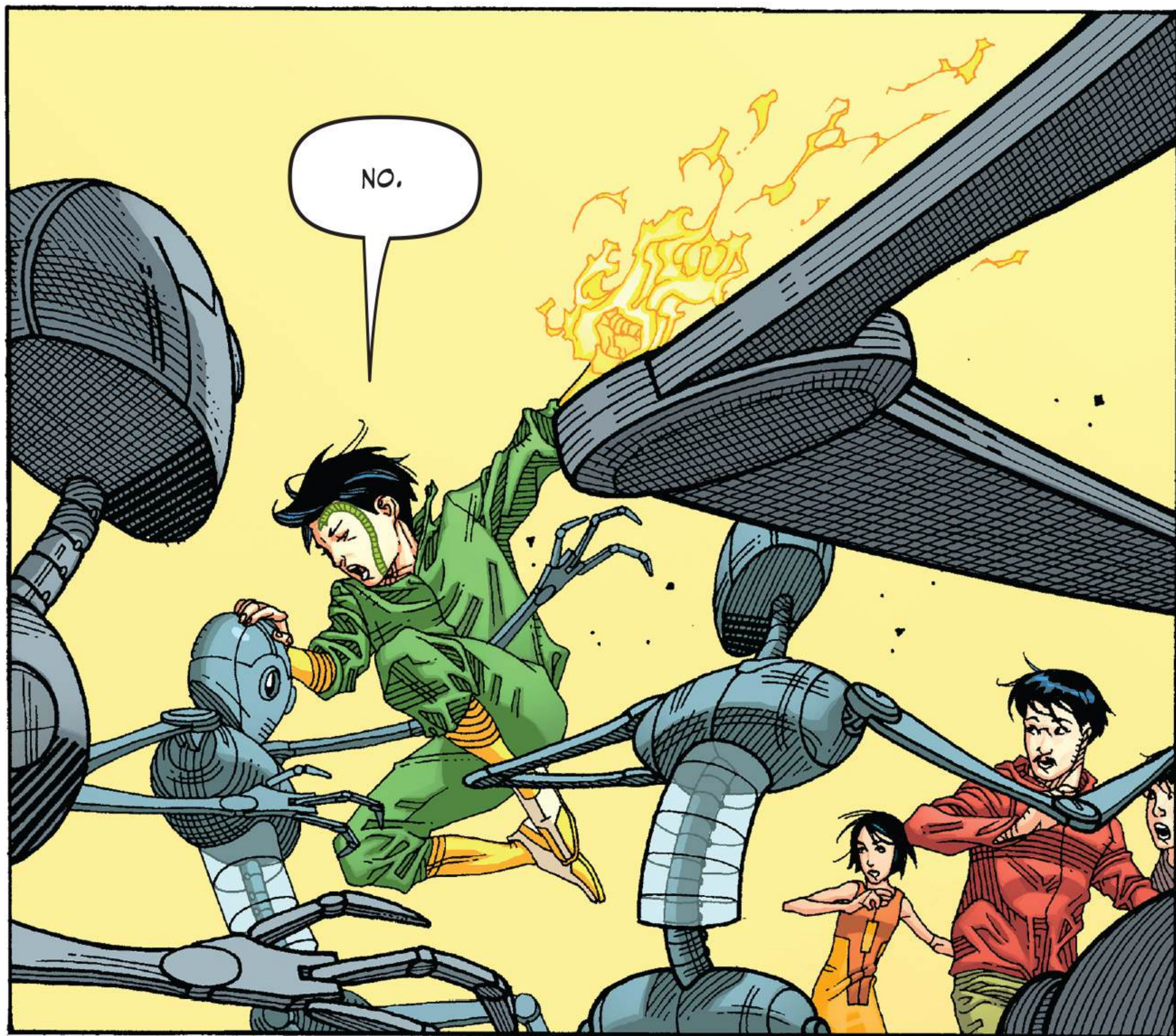
Nothing is uploaded.
There **is no** Heaven.

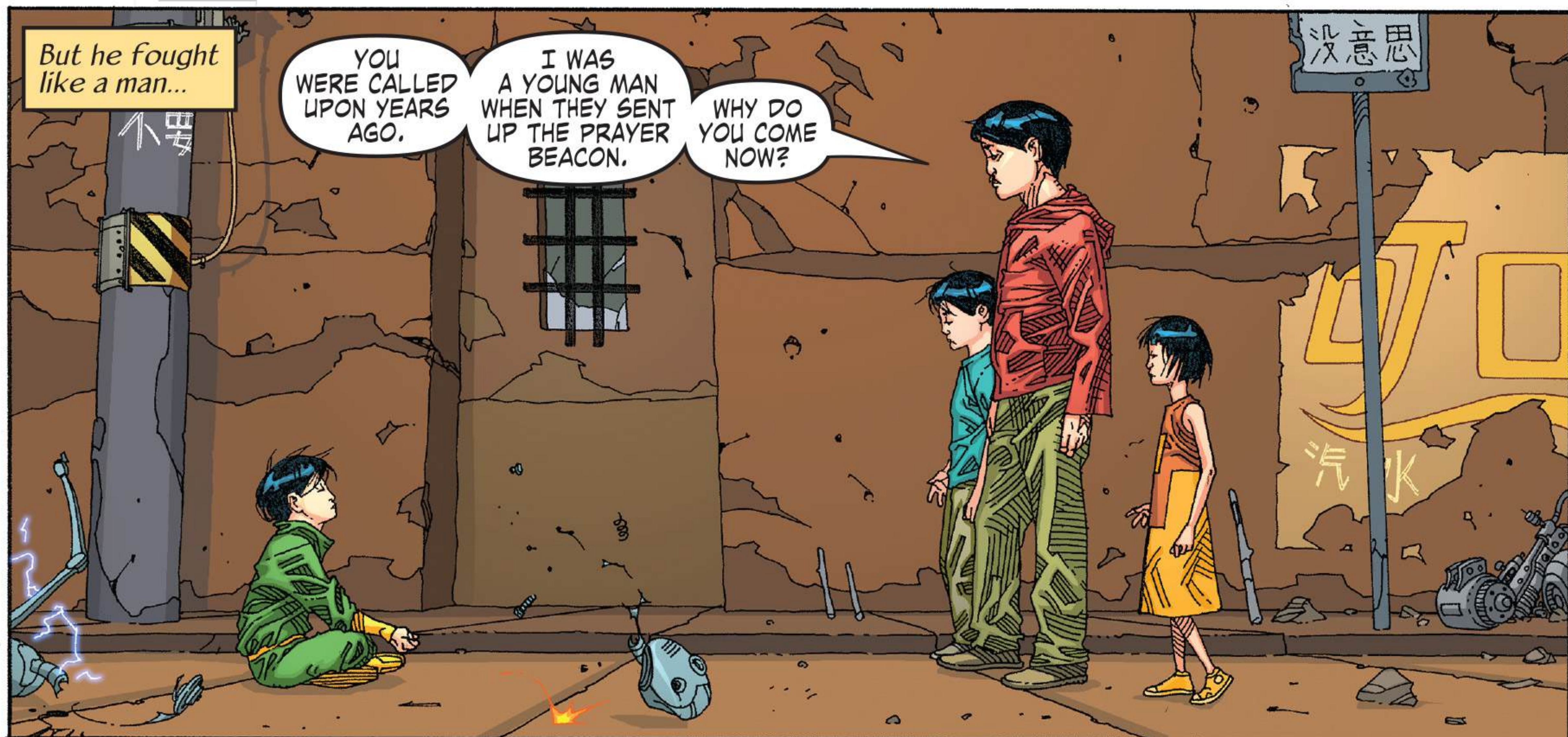
空的记忆*

*MEMORY EMPTY







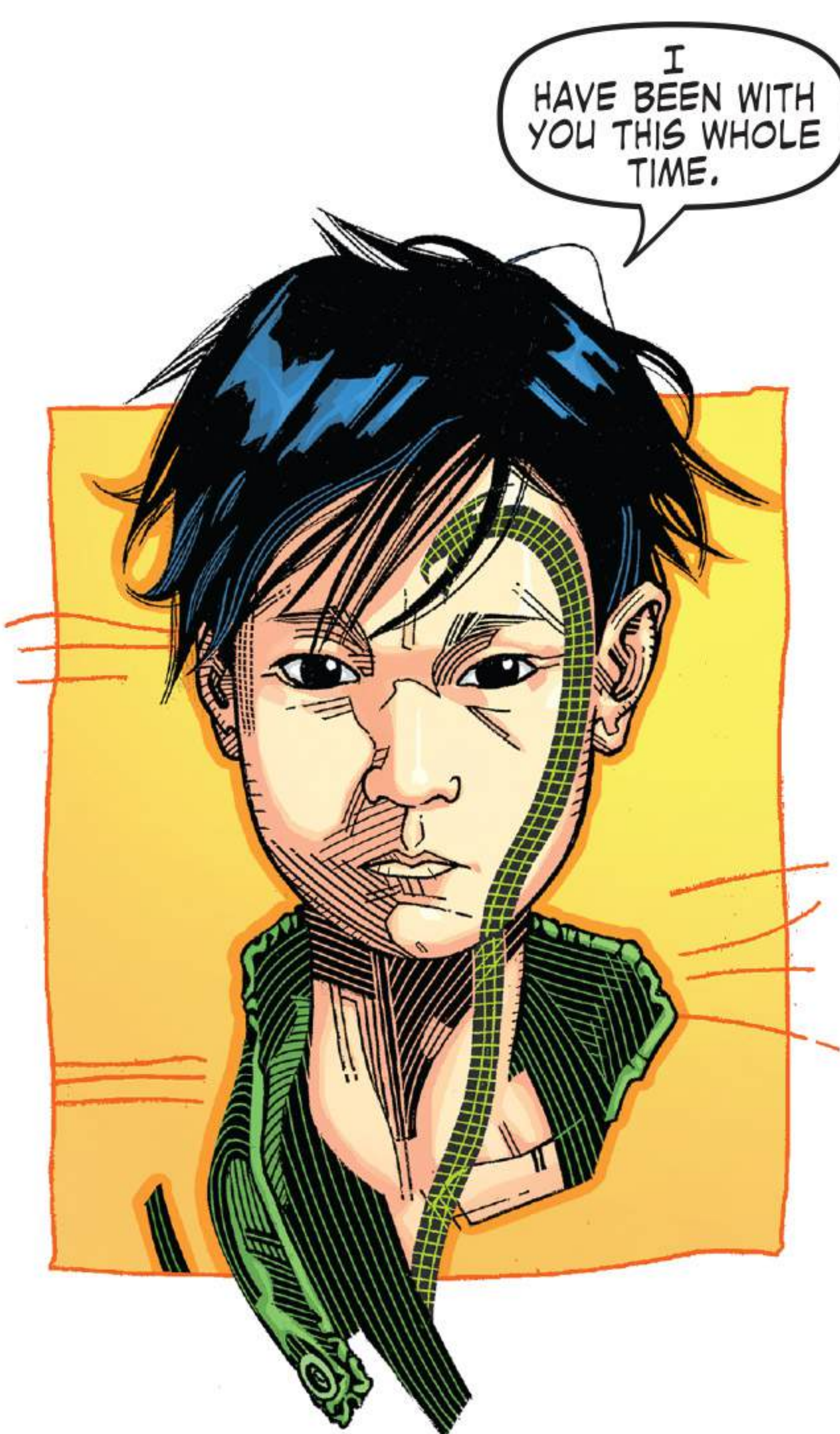


But he fought like a man...

YOU WERE CALLED UPON YEARS AGO.

I WAS A YOUNG MAN WHEN THEY SENT UP THE PRAYER BEACON.

WHY DO YOU COME NOW?



I HAVE BEEN WITH YOU THIS WHOLE TIME.



I MEAN NO DISRESPECT, BUT...
...WHY DID YOU DO NOTHING WHILE COUNTLESS SCORES OF OUR PEOPLE WERE SLAUGHTERED?



I KNOW THE SUFFERING YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE HAVE ENDURED.

I WATCHED IT ALL FROM ABOVE.

The hero looked no older than myself, but he spoke with a voice that sounded like Father's.

He told us his story.



"MY NAME IS WAH SING-RAND. I COME FROM THE CITY OF K'UN-LUN.

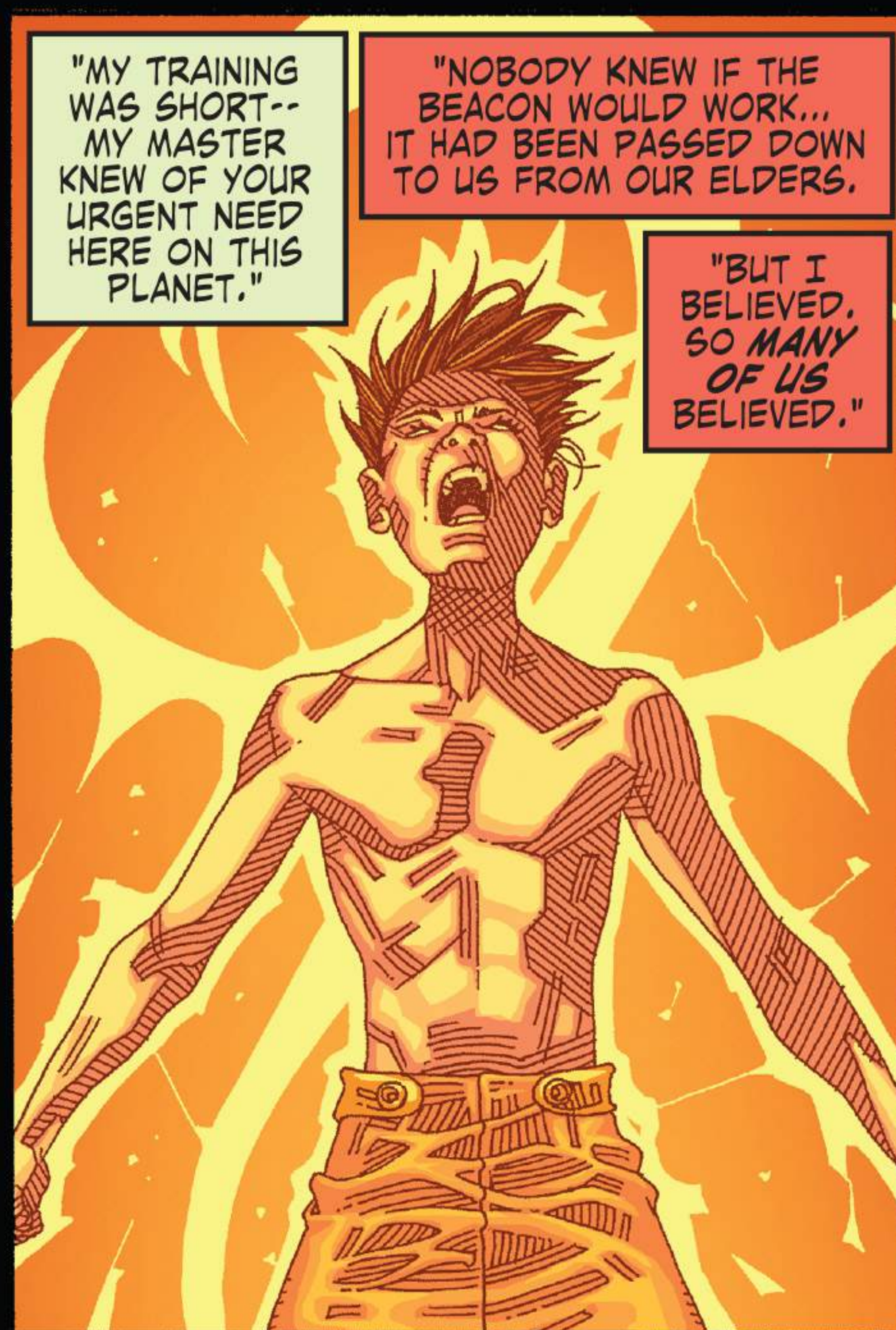
"I WAS BORN THERE, RAISED THERE, TRAINED THERE BY LEI KUNG KNIGHT, MY MASTER.



"I AM THE YOUNGEST EVER TO CHALLENGE THE DRAGON.



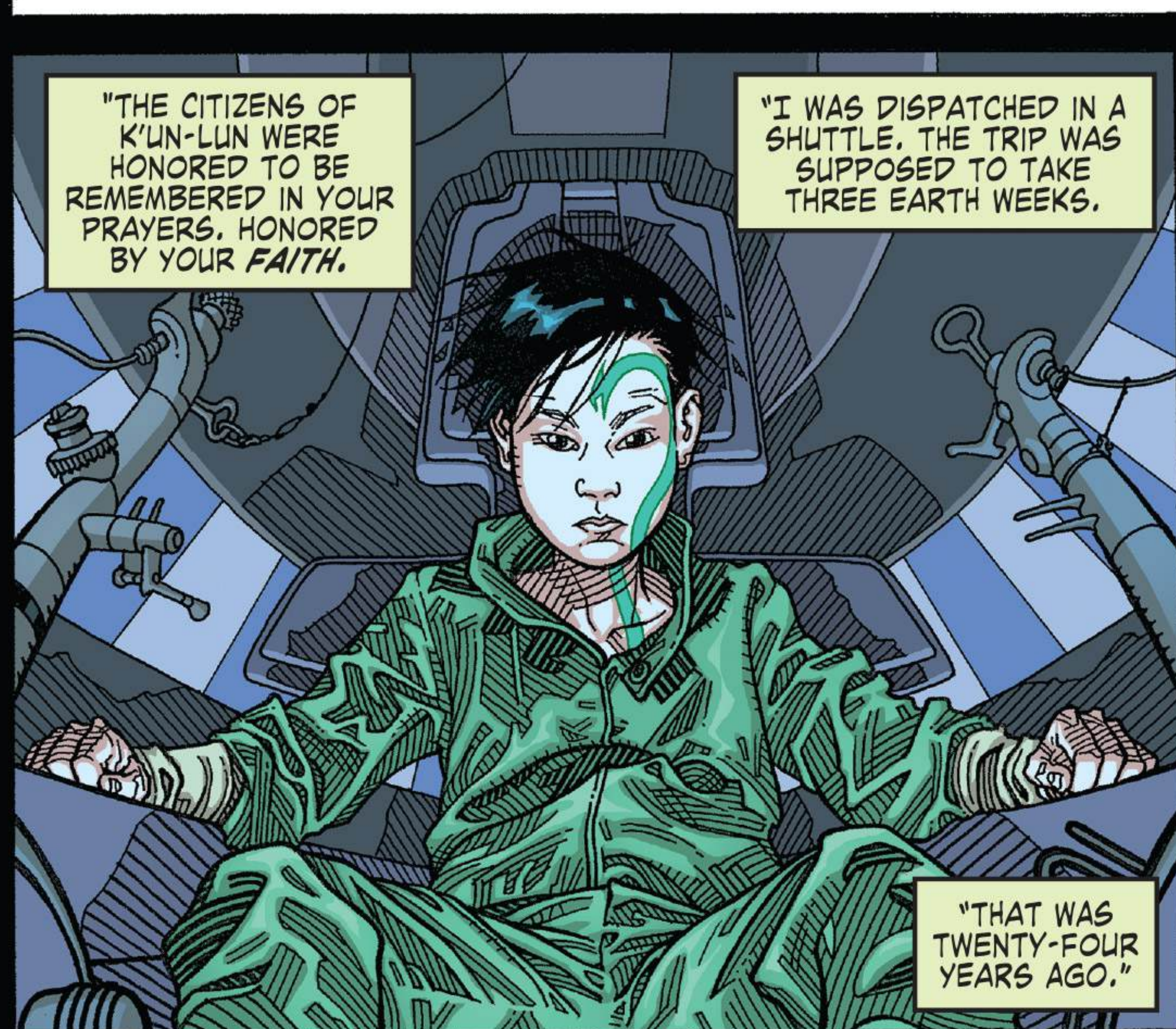
"THE YOUNGEST EVER TO WIN THE DRAGON'S CHI.



"MY TRAINING WAS SHORT-- MY MASTER KNEW OF YOUR URGENT NEED HERE ON THIS PLANET."

"NOBODY KNEW IF THE BEACON WOULD WORK... IT HAD BEEN PASSED DOWN TO US FROM OUR ELDERS.

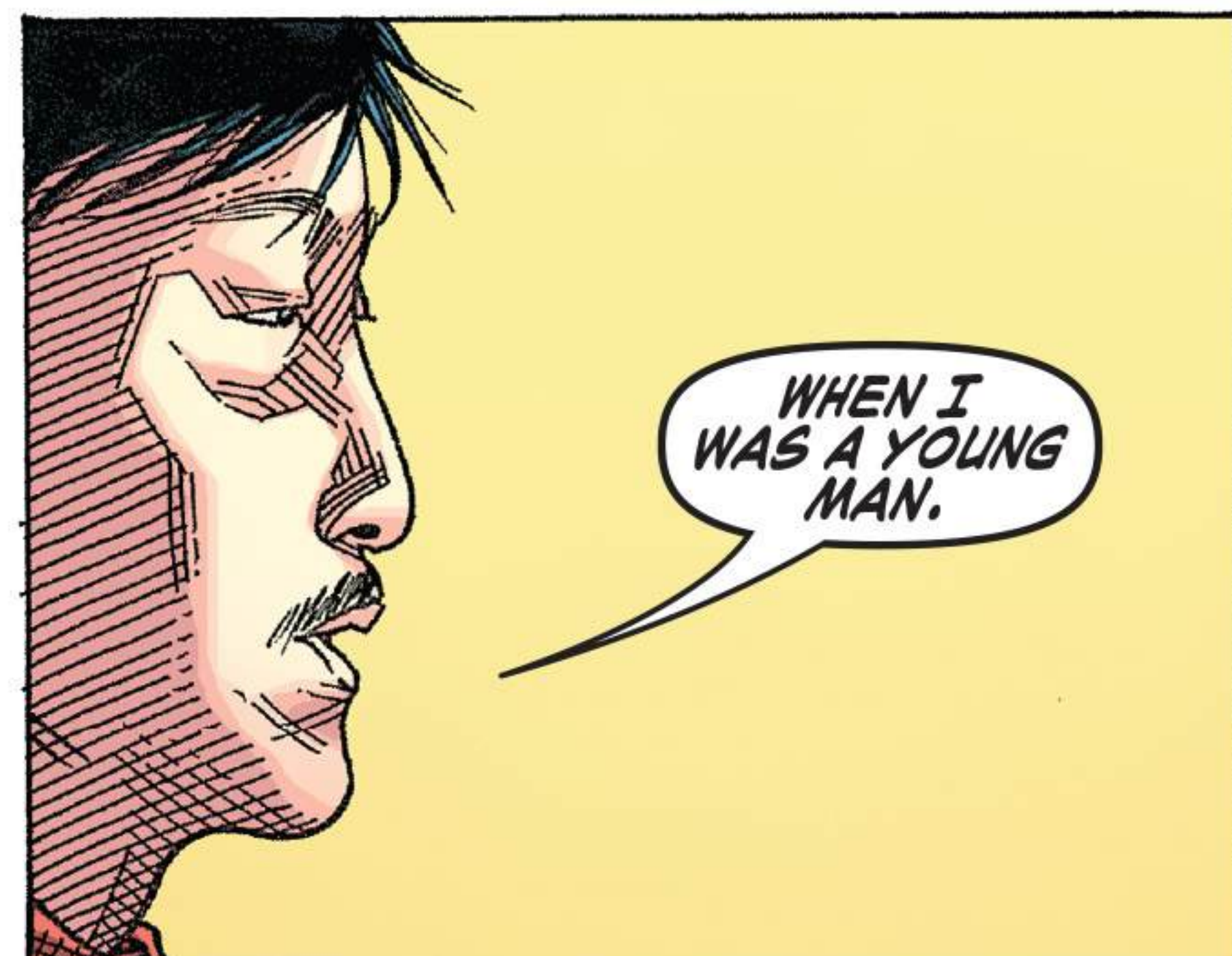
"BUT I BELIEVED, SO MANY OF US BELIEVED."



"THE CITIZENS OF K'UN-LUN WERE HONORED TO BE REMEMBERED IN YOUR PRAYERS, HONORED BY YOUR FAITH.

"I WAS DISPATCHED IN A SHUTTLE. THE TRIP WAS SUPPOSED TO TAKE THREE EARTH WEEKS.

"THAT WAS TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO."



WHEN I WAS A YOUNG MAN.



BUT YOUR PRESIDENT KNEW I WAS COMING.

"HIS WEAPON STRUCK
MY VESSEL JUST AS
I EMERGED FROM
THE WORMHOLE.

"IT FROZE MY SHIP
IN A TEMPORAL
POCKET.



"I WAS UNABLE
TO MOVE. SPEAK.
CLOSE MY EYES.



"OR MOVE
A FINGER.



"BUT I WAS
CONSCIOUS.

"ON THE SHIP'S
DISPLAYS IN FRONT
OF ME, I COULD SEE
WHAT WAS HAPPENING
TO YOU BELOW.



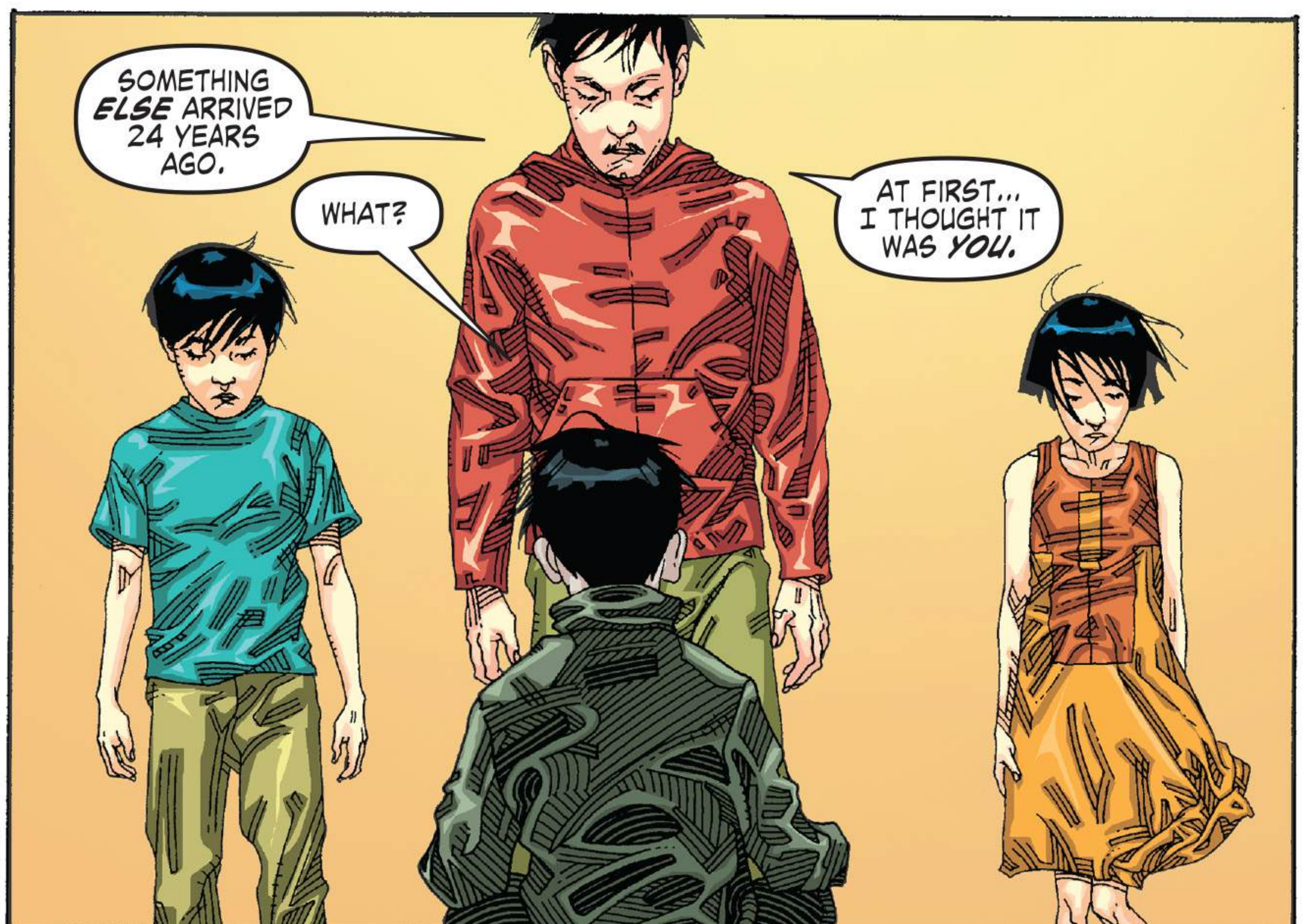
"I WATCHED
THE MIGRATION
TO DEATH."

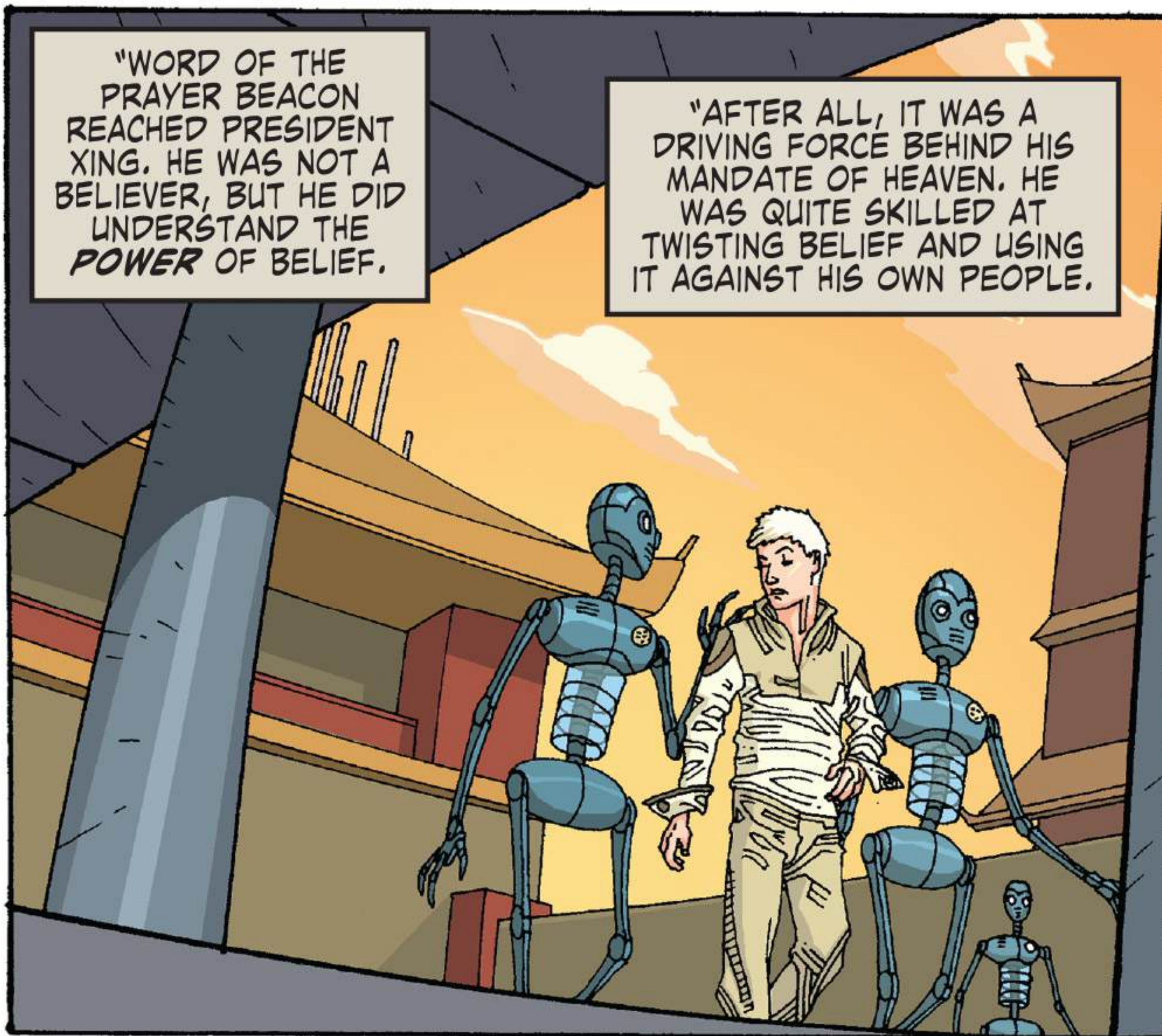


THEN ONE
DAY, ABOUT 22
YEARS AGO, IT
HAPPENED.



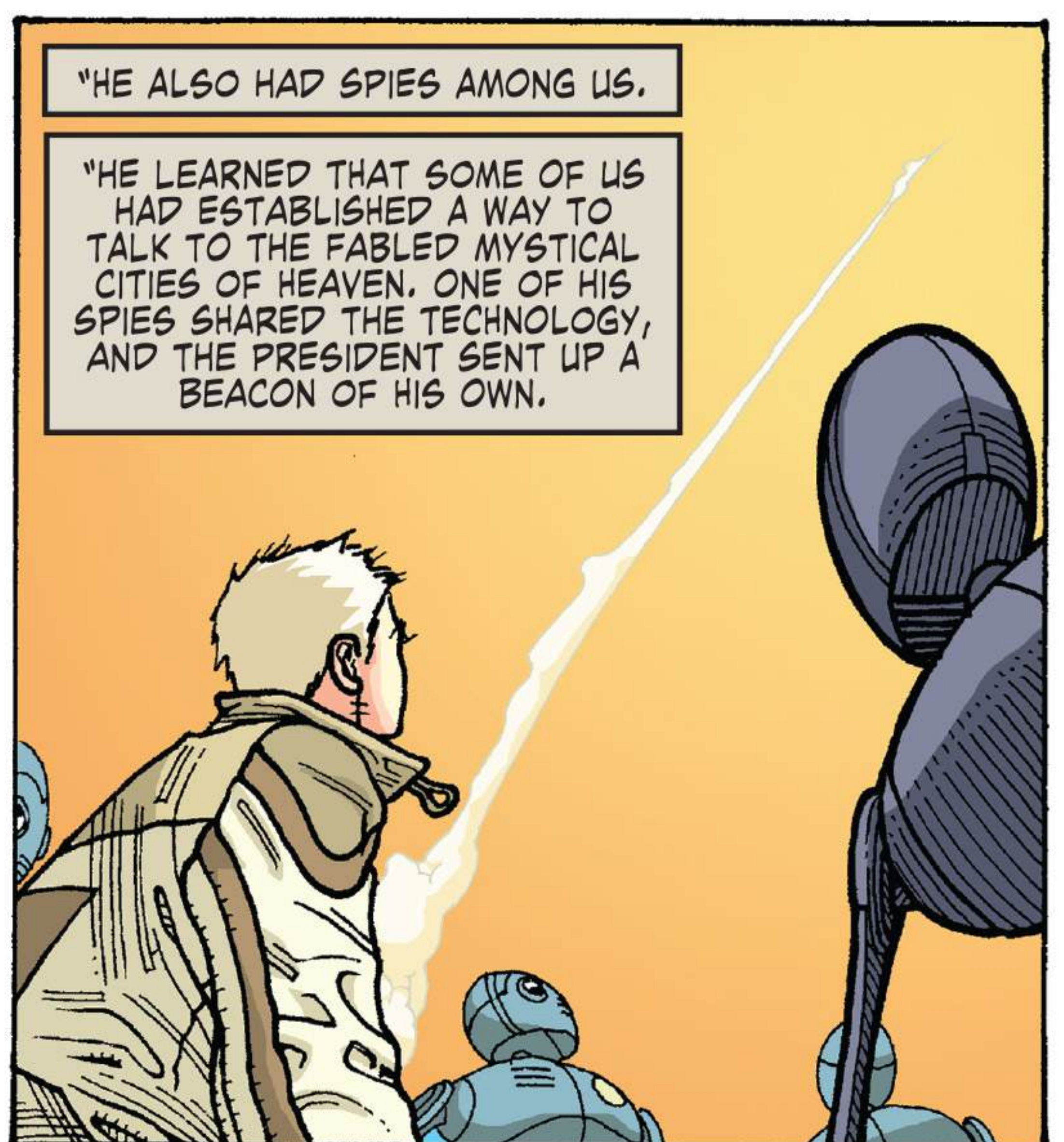
"I WRIGGLED
MY FINGER.





"WORD OF THE PRAYER BEACON REACHED PRESIDENT XING. HE WAS NOT A BELIEVER, BUT HE DID UNDERSTAND THE **POWER** OF BELIEF.

"AFTER ALL, IT WAS A DRIVING FORCE BEHIND HIS MANDATE OF HEAVEN. HE WAS QUITE SKILLED AT TWISTING BELIEF AND USING IT AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE.



"HE ALSO HAD SPIES AMONG US.

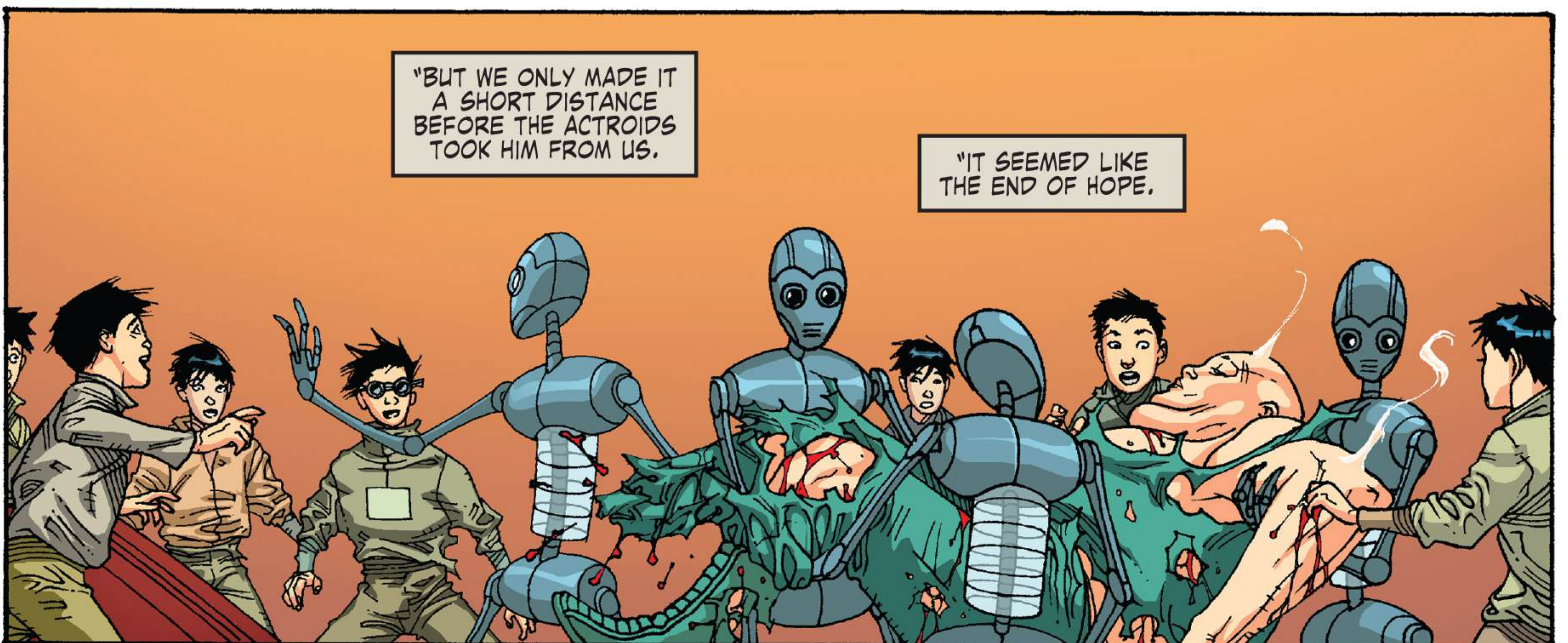
"HE LEARNED THAT SOME OF US HAD ESTABLISHED A WAY TO TALK TO THE FABLED MYSTICAL CITIES OF HEAVEN. ONE OF HIS SPIES SHARED THE TECHNOLOGY, AND THE PRESIDENT SENT UP A BEACON OF HIS OWN.



"SO WHEN *HIS* ASSASSIN ARRIVED A FEW MONTHS LATER, SOME OF US MISTOOK HIM FOR YOU.



"WE PULLED THE OBESE WARRIOR OUT OF THE SHIP AND CARRIED HIS BARELY-ALIVE BODY ON OUR SHOULDERS...

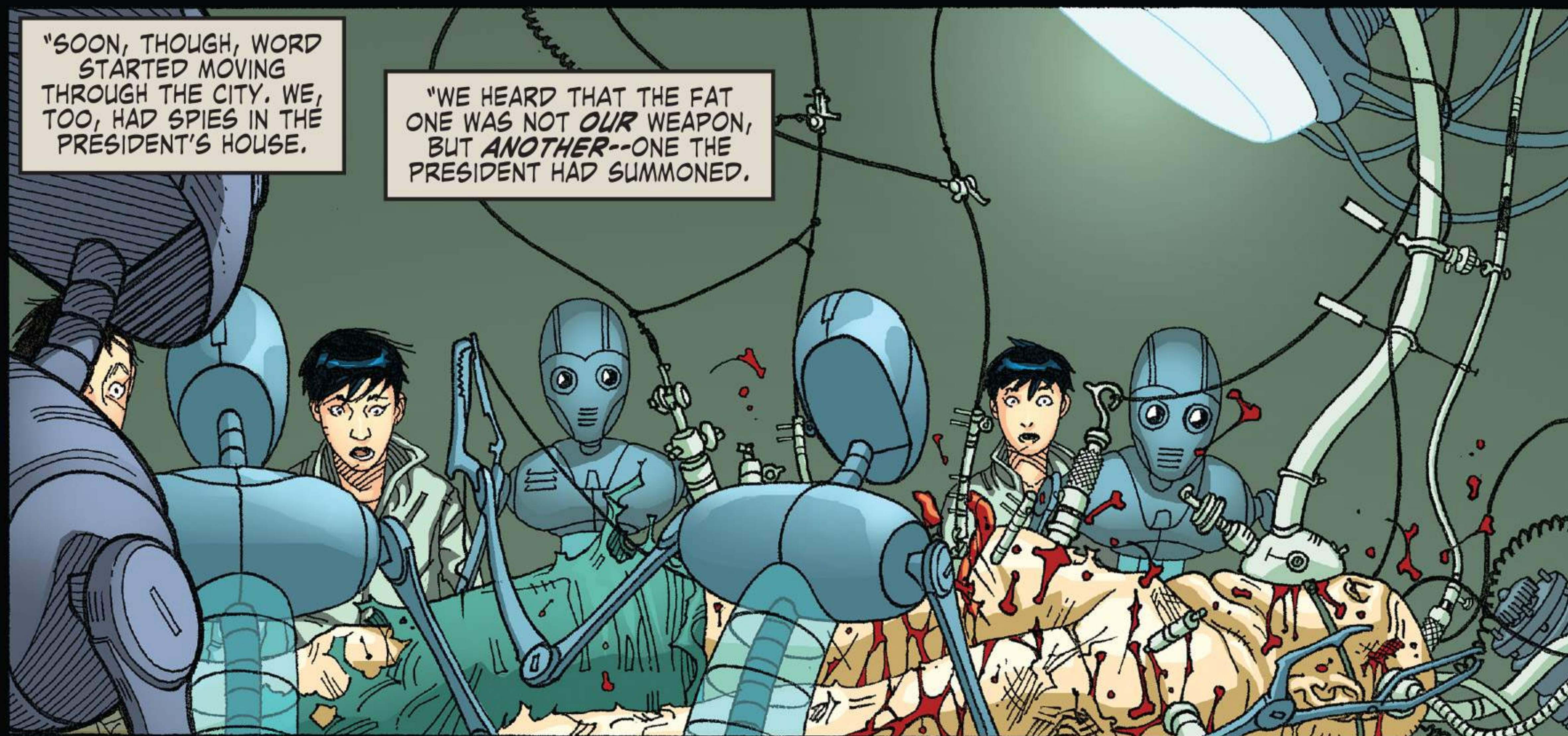


"BUT WE ONLY MADE IT A SHORT DISTANCE BEFORE THE ACTROIDS TOOK HIM FROM US.

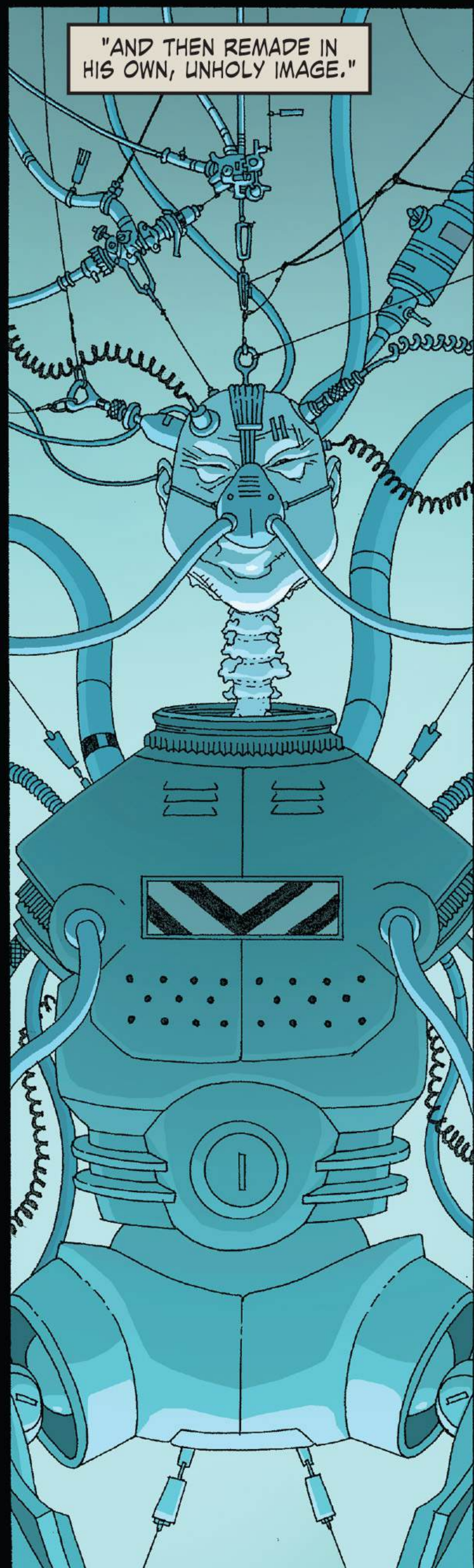
"IT SEEMED LIKE THE END OF HOPE.

"SOON, THOUGH, WORD STARTED MOVING THROUGH THE CITY. WE, TOO, HAD SPIES IN THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE."

"WE HEARD THAT THE FAT ONE WAS NOT *OUR* WEAPON, BUT *ANOTHER*--ONE THE PRESIDENT HAD SUMMONED."

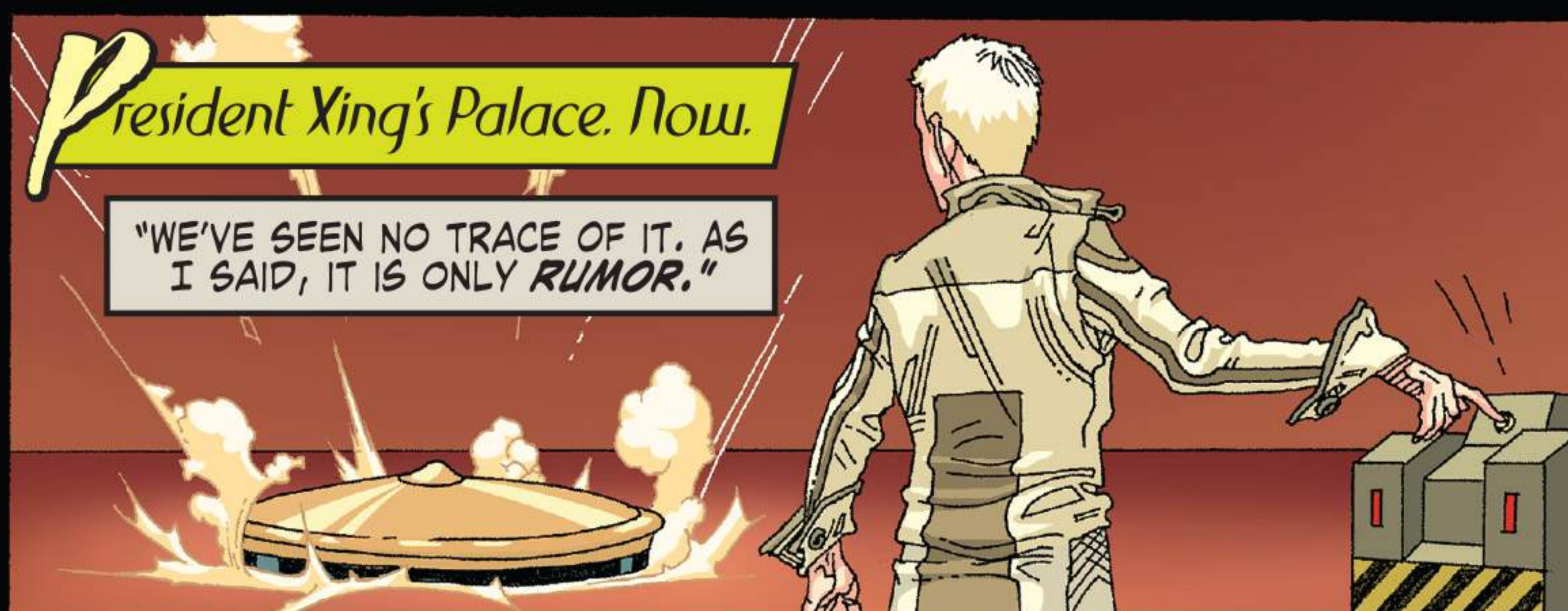


"AND THEN REMADE IN HIS OWN, UNHOLY IMAGE."



President Xing's Palace. Now.

"WE'VE SEEN NO TRACE OF IT. AS I SAID, IT IS ONLY *RUMOR*."

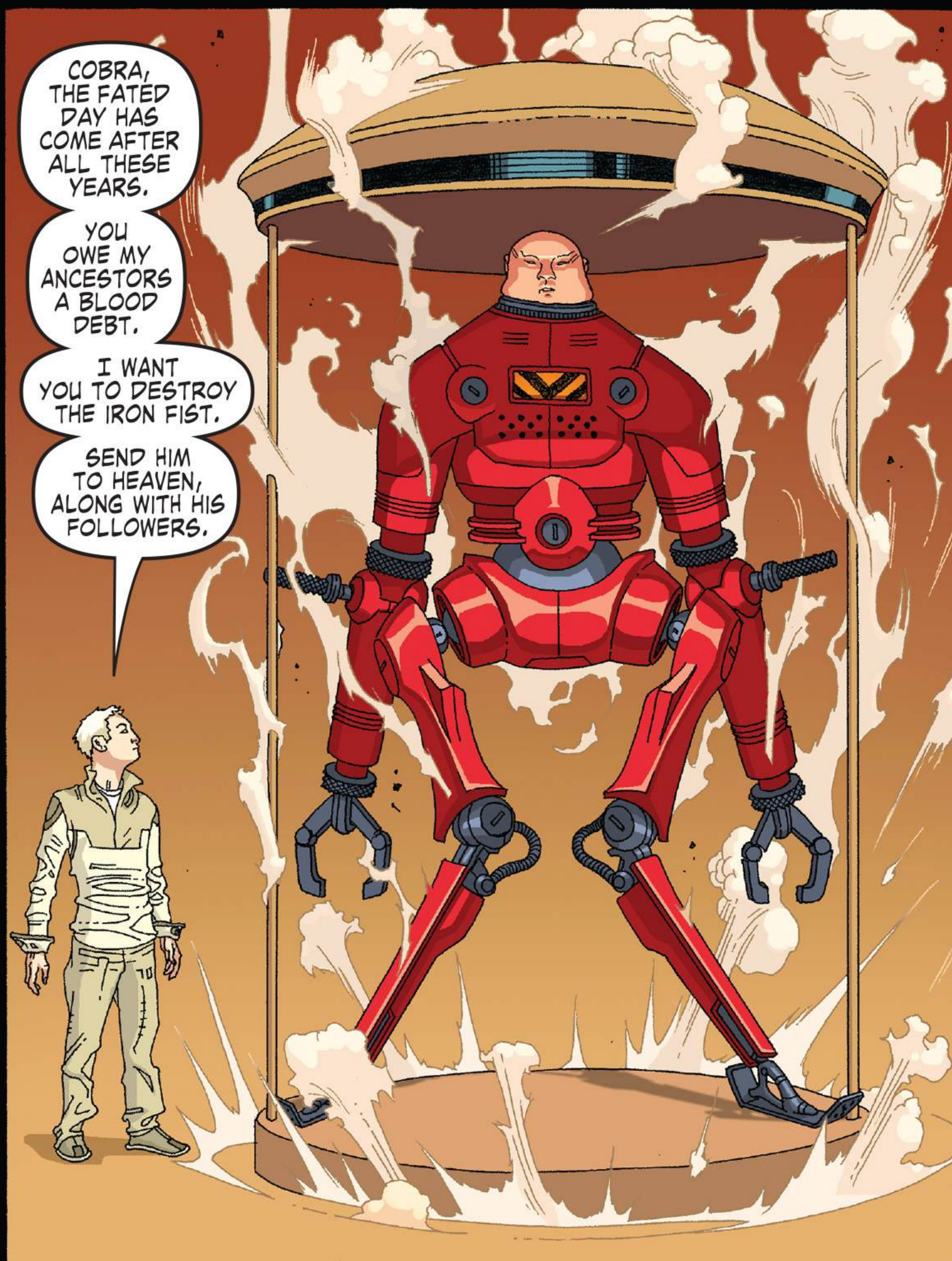


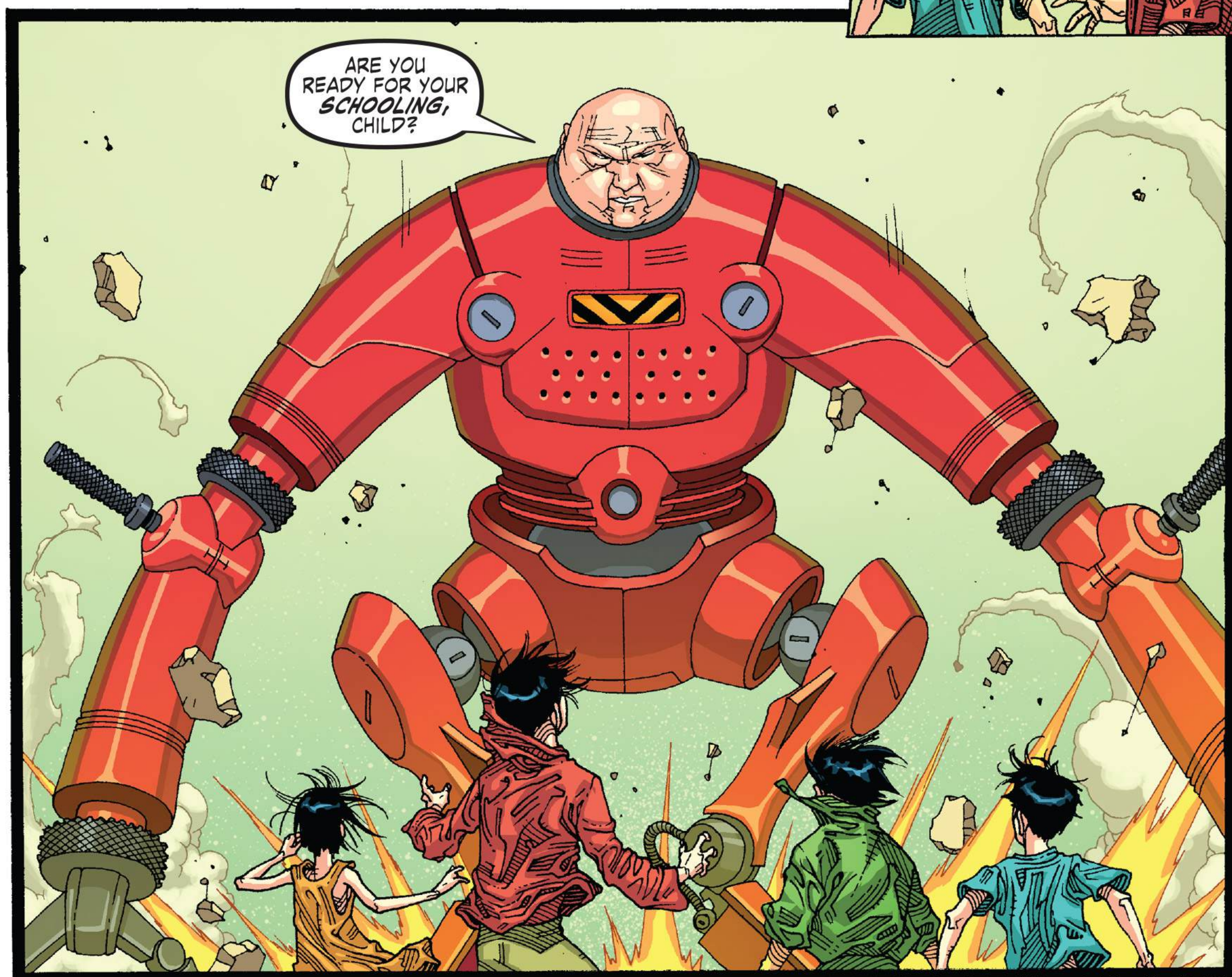
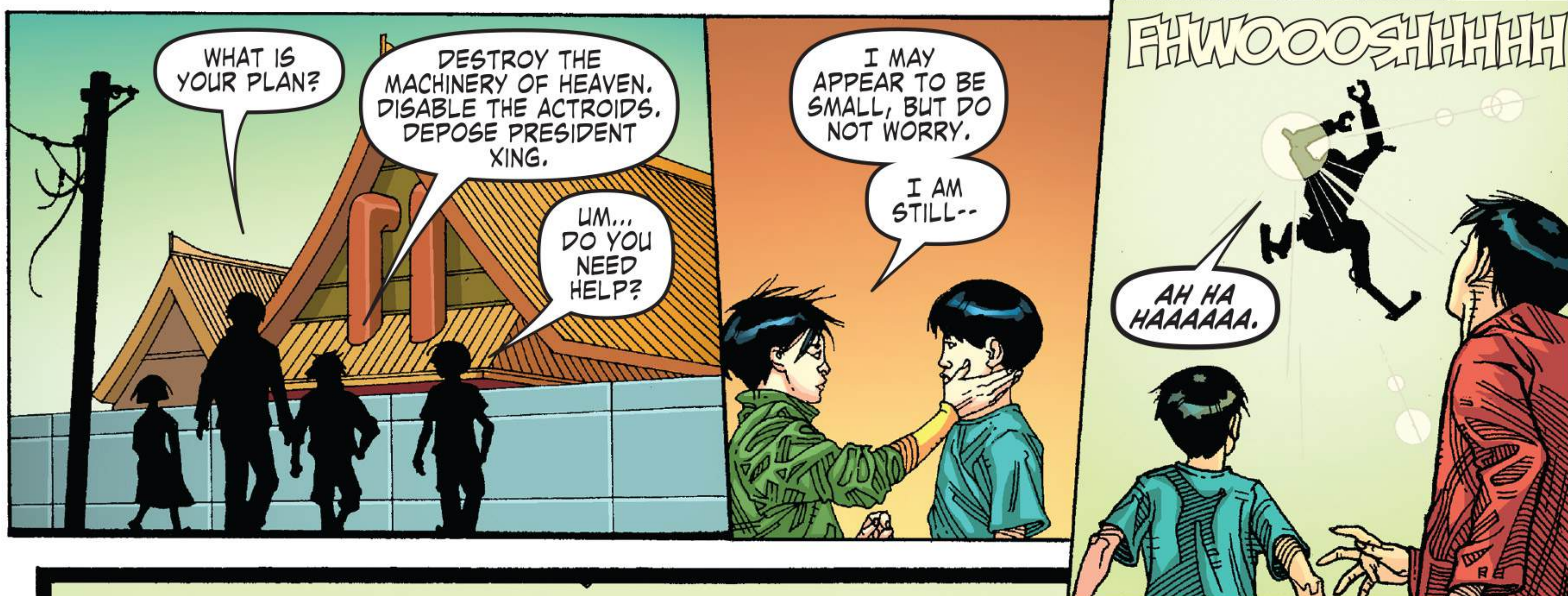
COBRA,
THE FATED
DAY HAS
COME AFTER
ALL THESE
YEARS.

YOU
OWE MY
ANCESTORS
A BLOOD
DEBT.

I WANT
YOU TO DESTROY
THE IRON FIST.

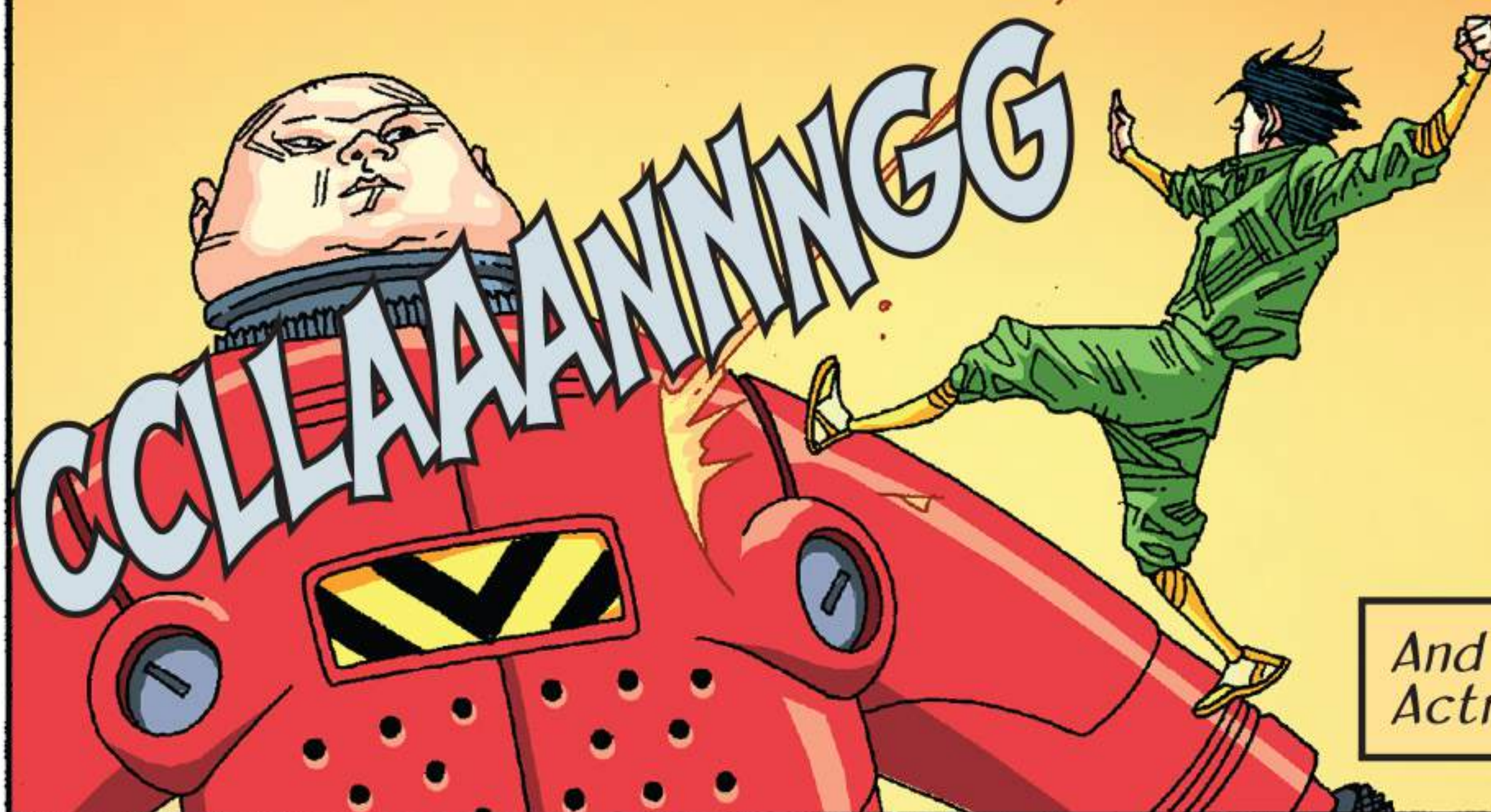
SEND HIM
TO HEAVEN,
ALONG WITH HIS
FOLLOWERS.





If what the Iron Fist says is true,
then he has fought no **real** opponent
since the dragon Shou-Lao.

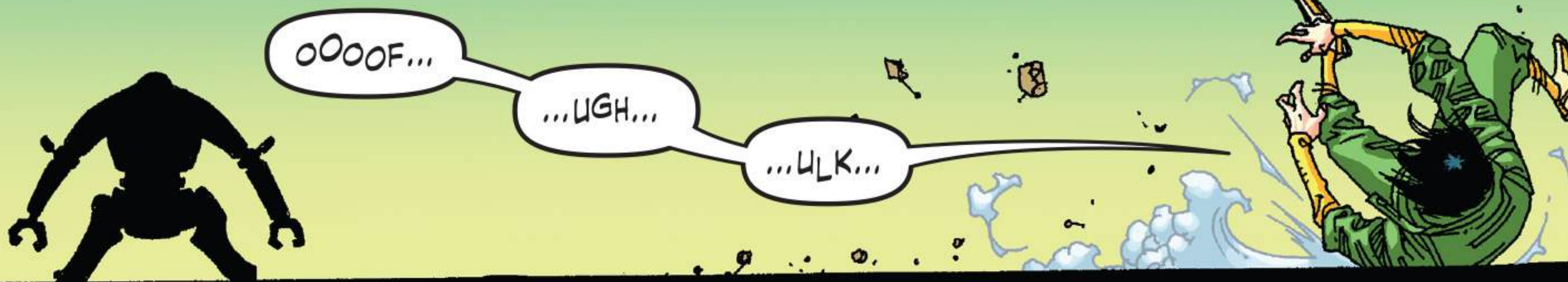
He's only fought
a few robots.



And this is no
Actroid robot.

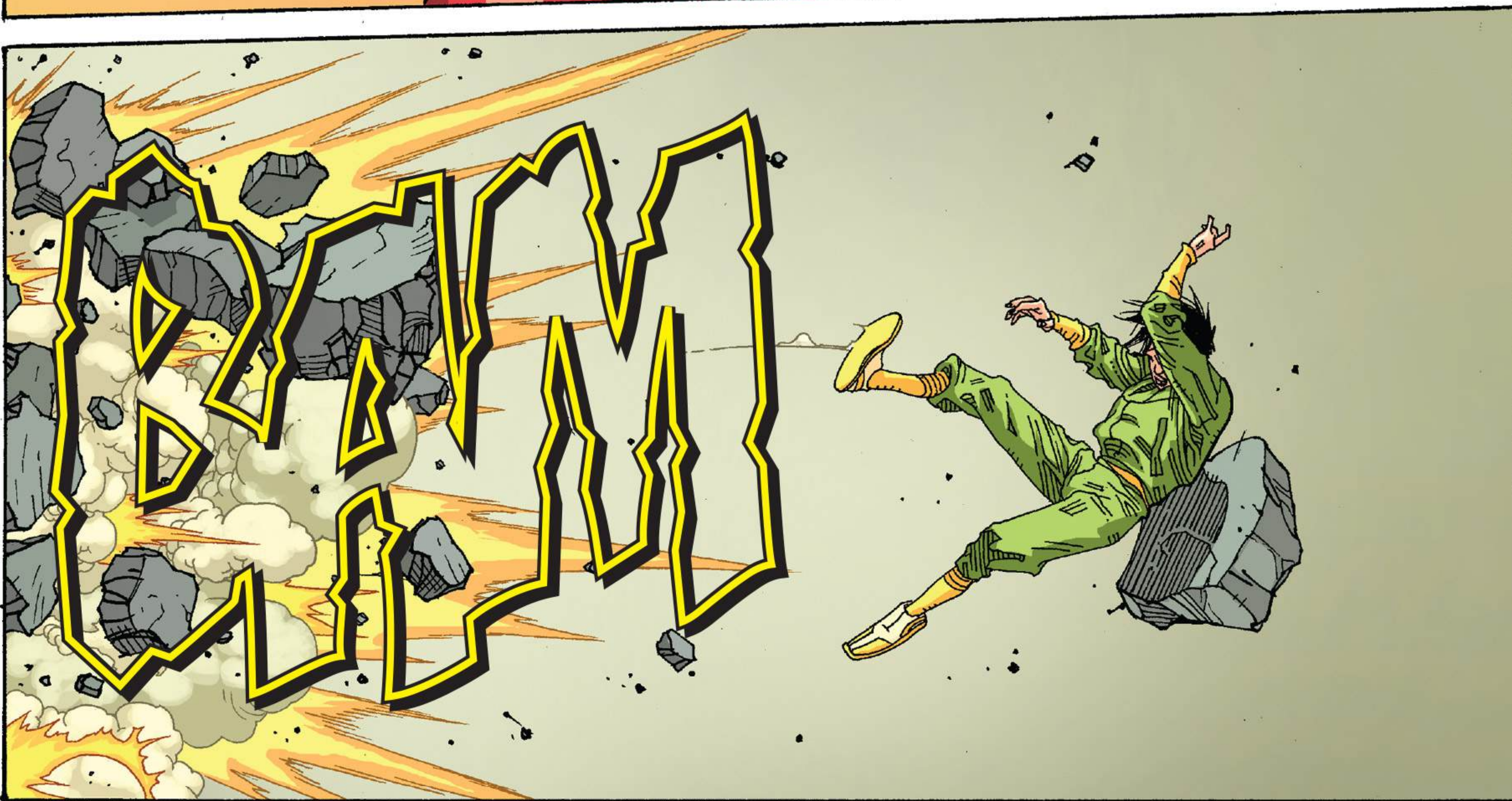
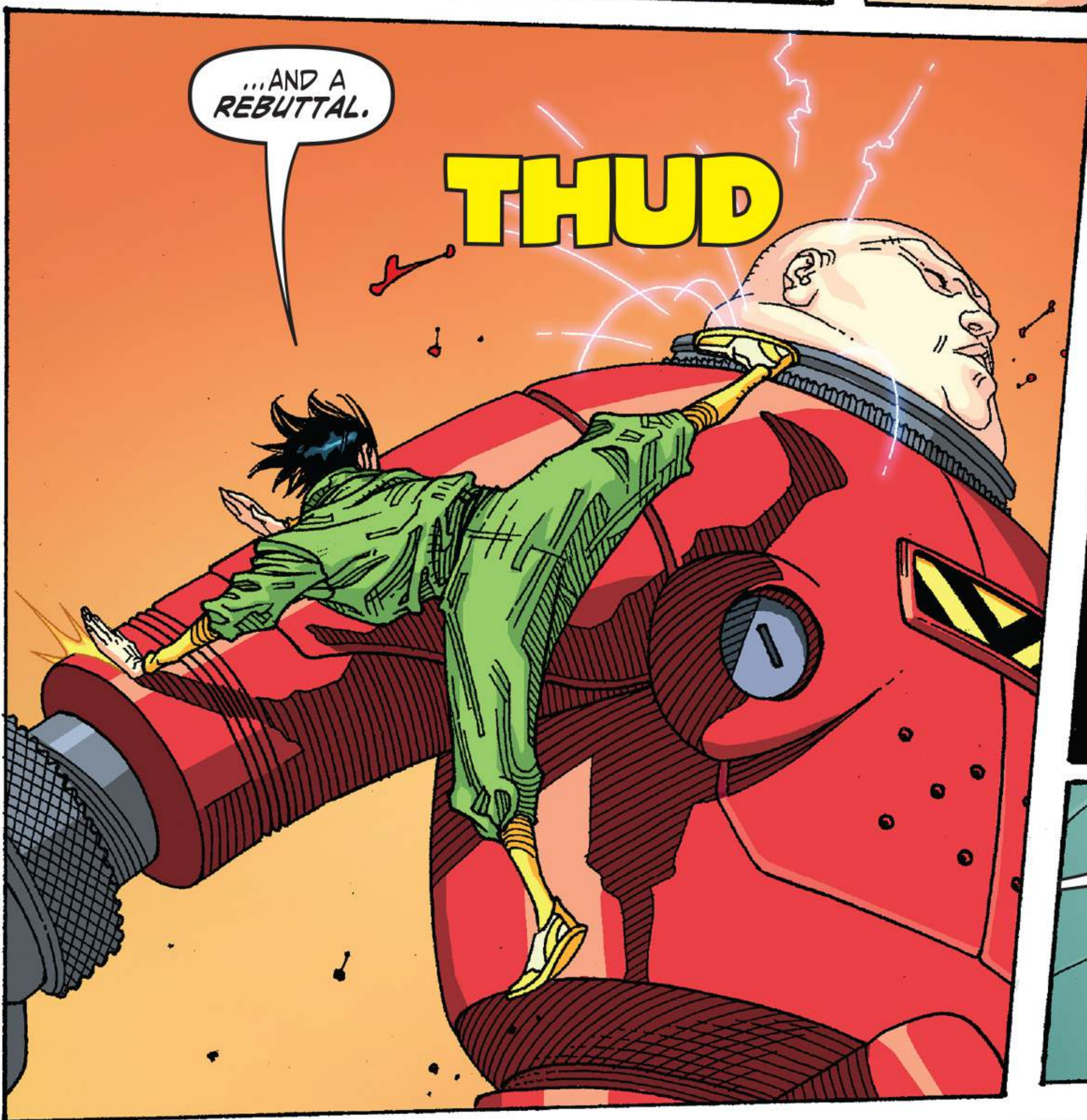
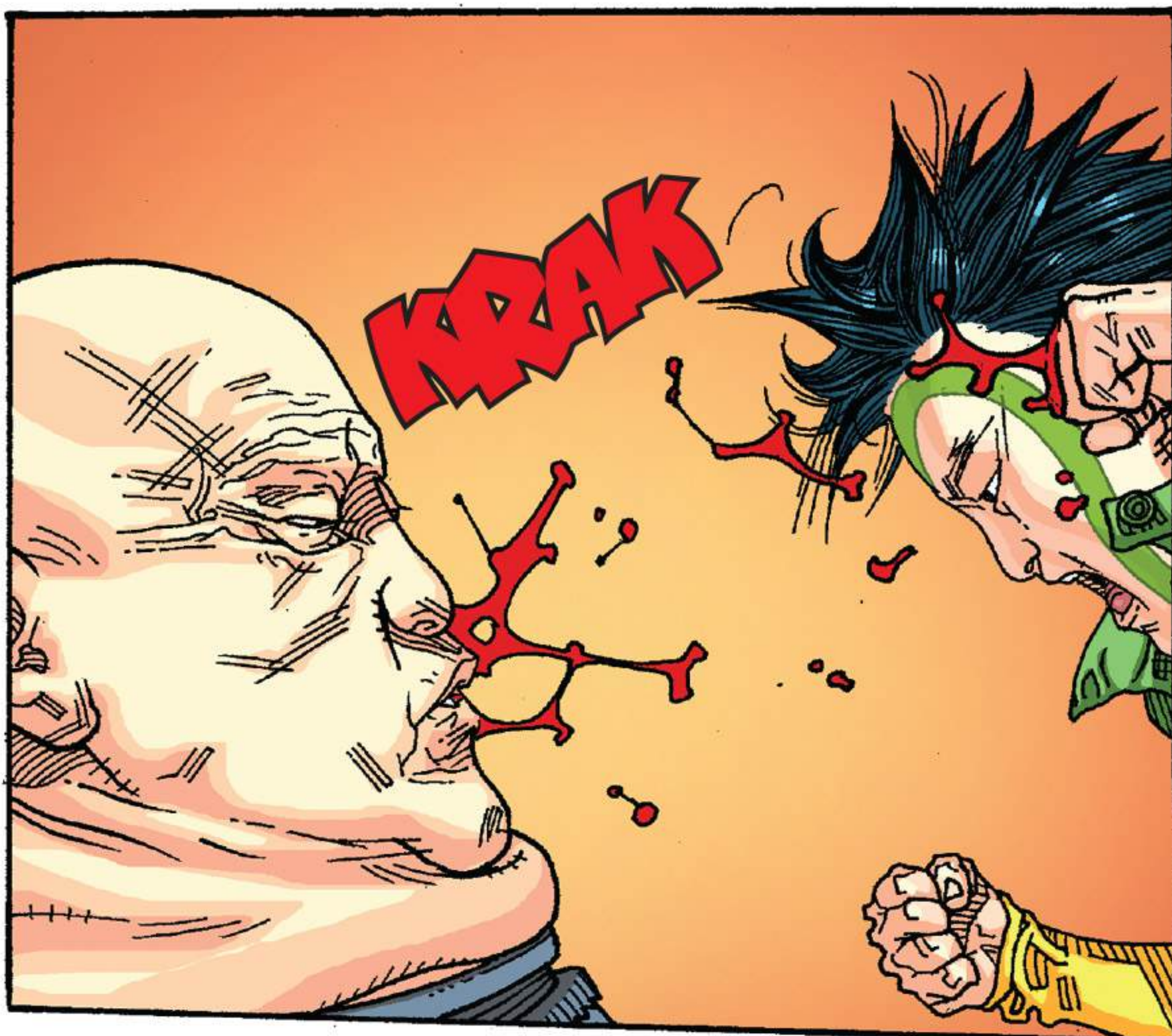
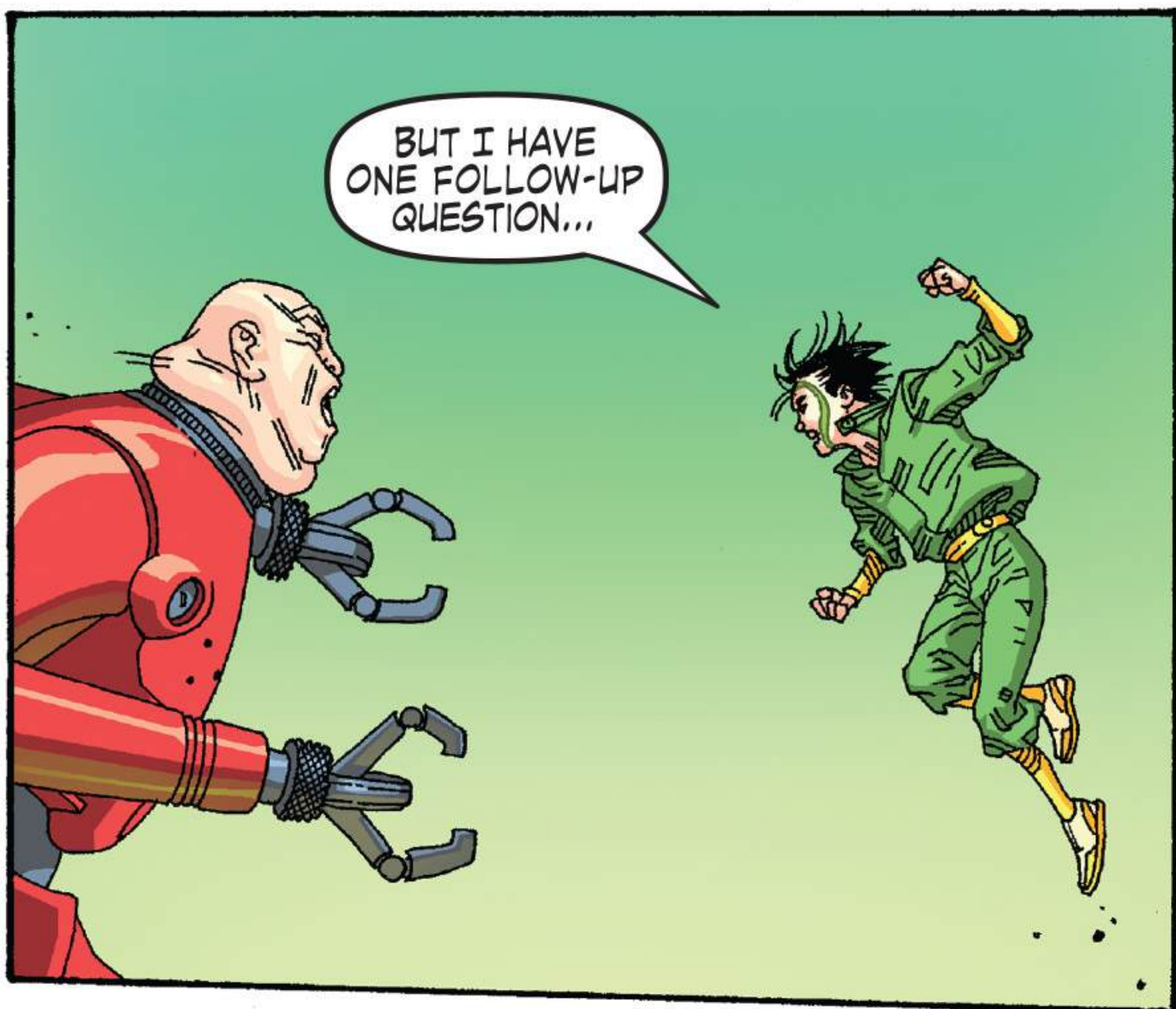


THWOK



SO!
DID YOU LEARN
SOMETHING?

INTERESTING,
TEACHER.



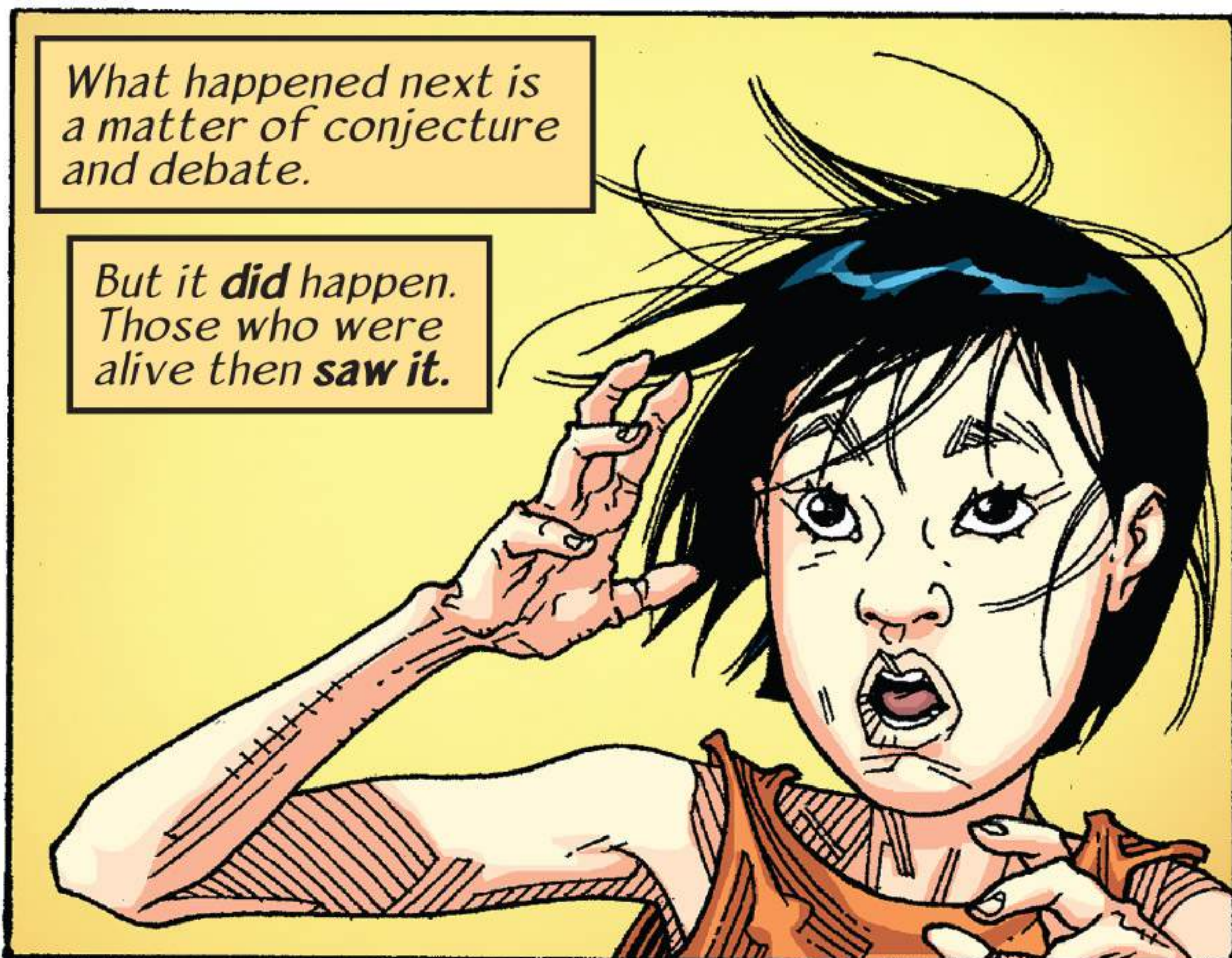


After
destroying
the Iron Fist,
the Cobra
came for us.

WHO WILL
BE FIRST TO
JOIN YOUR HERO?
HE IS WAITING
FOR YOU!

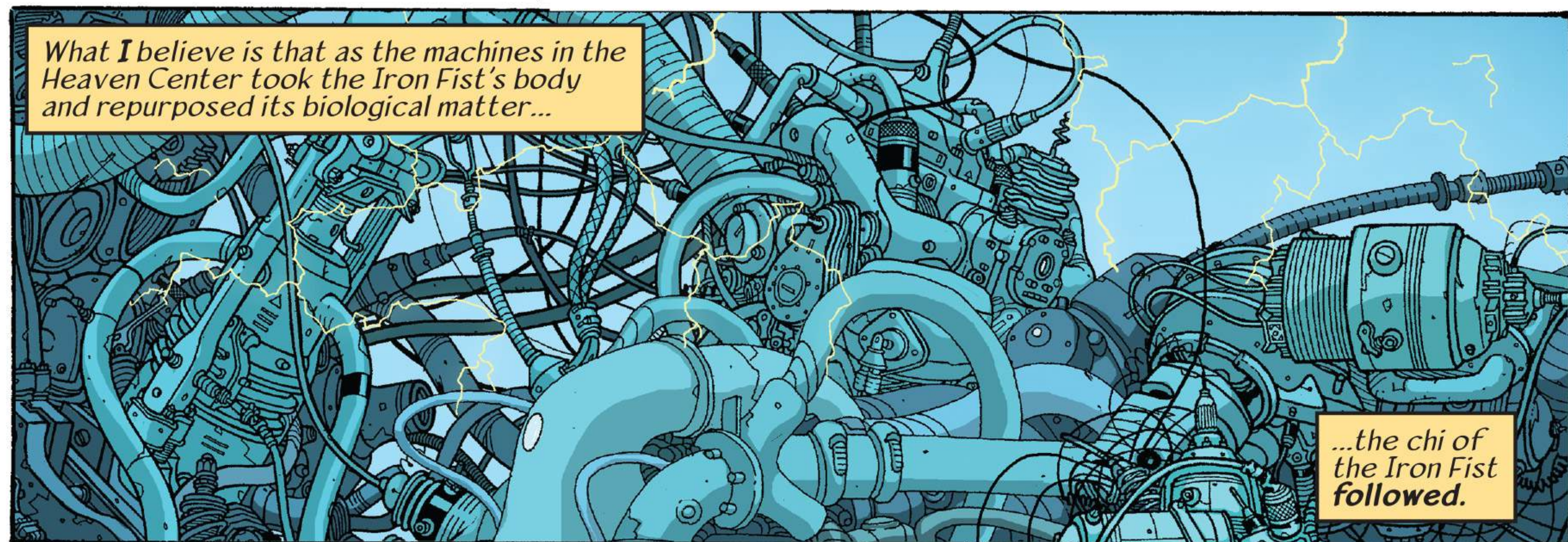


YOU,
OLD ONE?



What happened next is
a matter of conjecture
and debate.

But it **did** happen.
Those who were
alive then **saw it**.



What **I** believe is that as the machines in the
Heaven Center took the Iron Fist's body
and repurposed its biological matter...

...the chi of
the Iron Fist
followed.



And it began
to do some
repurposing
of its own.



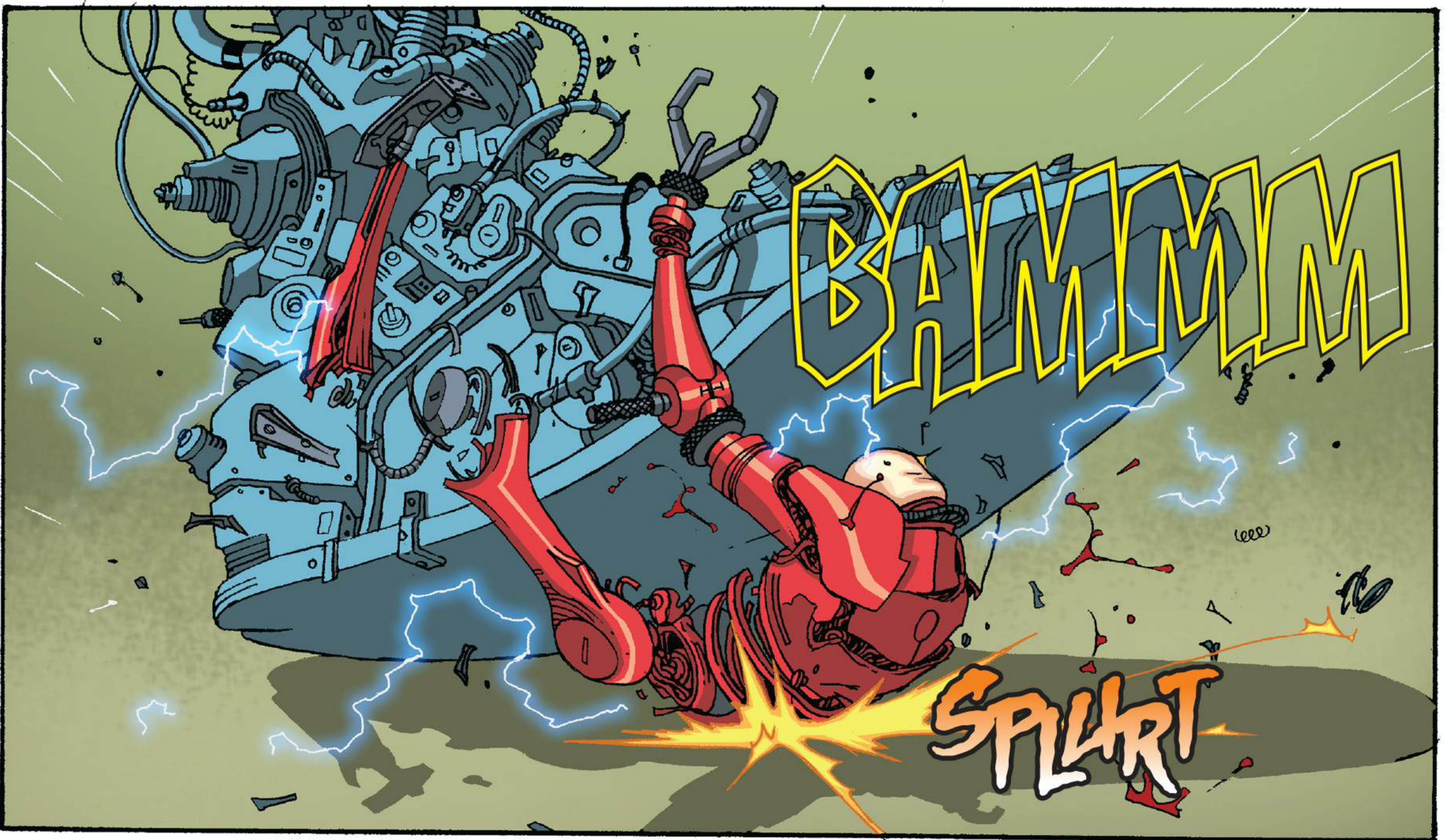
It used every fragment
of silicon and metal...

...and remade
them in its
own image.

This is the only explanation
for what we saw that day.

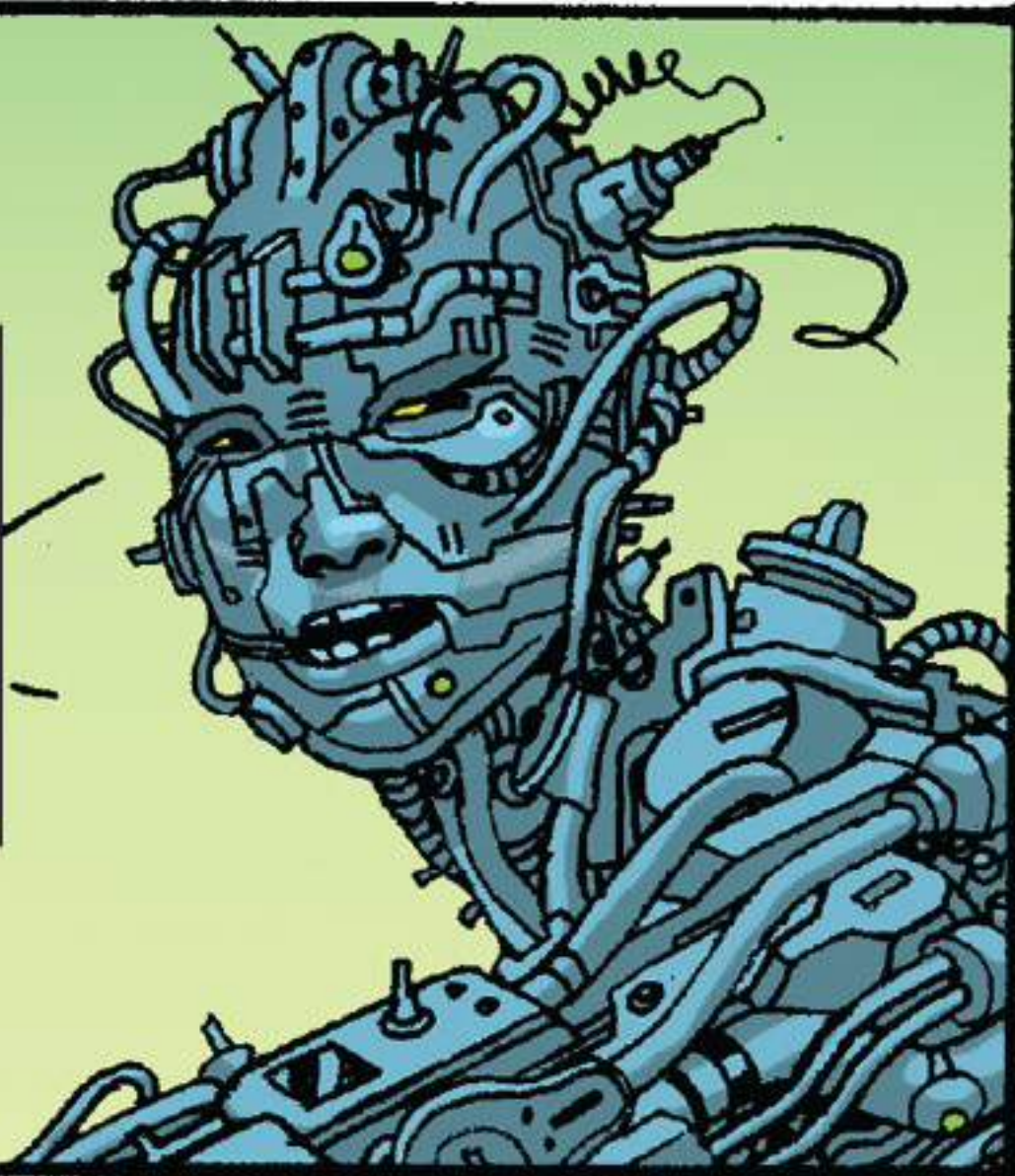


EH?



Others say it was another
Weapon sent from another
Mystical City. Or a god or
demon of some kind, vying
for power.

But I knew it was **him**.



Wah Sing-Rand, the Immortal
Weapon who traveled 4.3
light years to free us all...

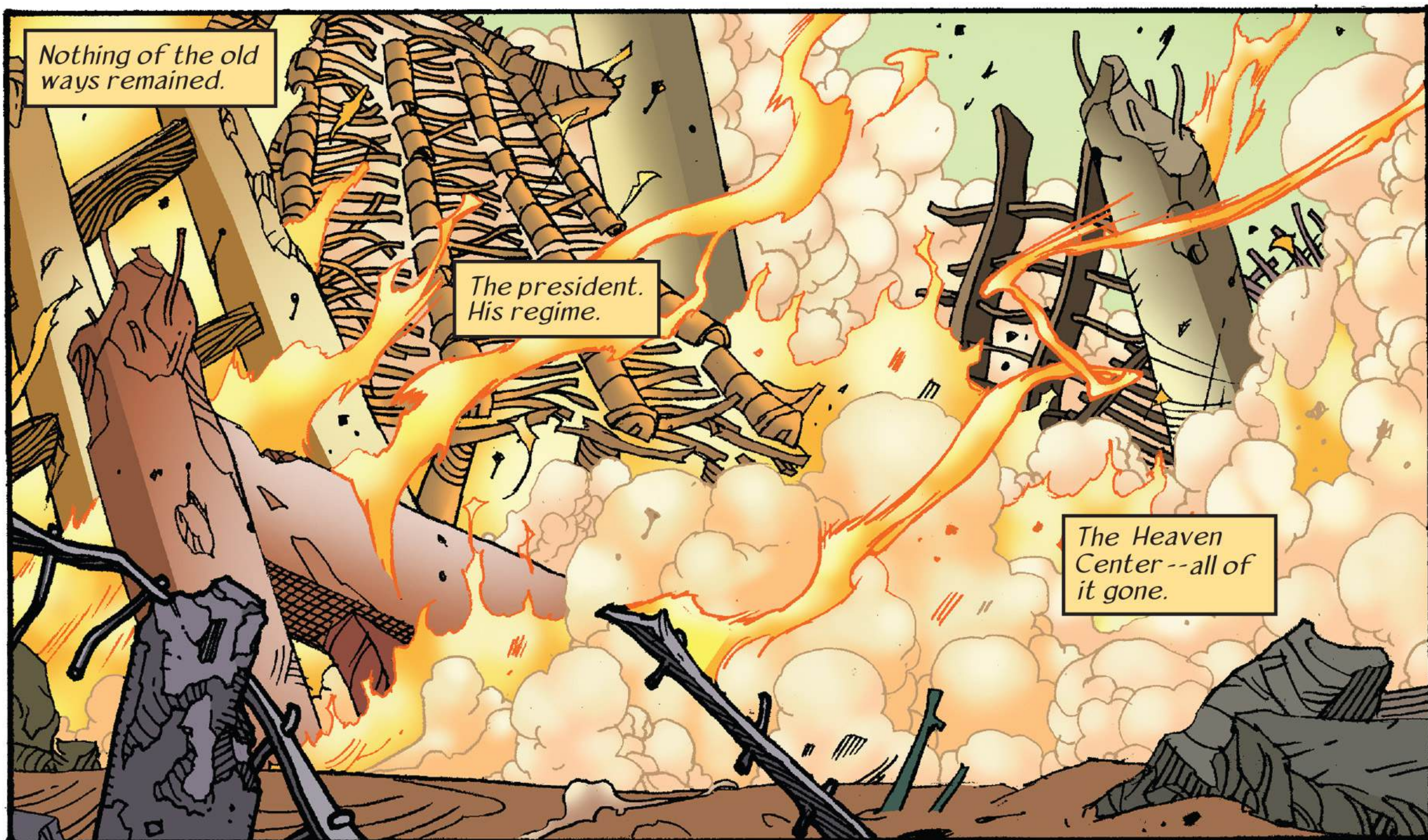


...and did so with
a **single punch**.



A punch he'd been
dreaming about
for **24** years.





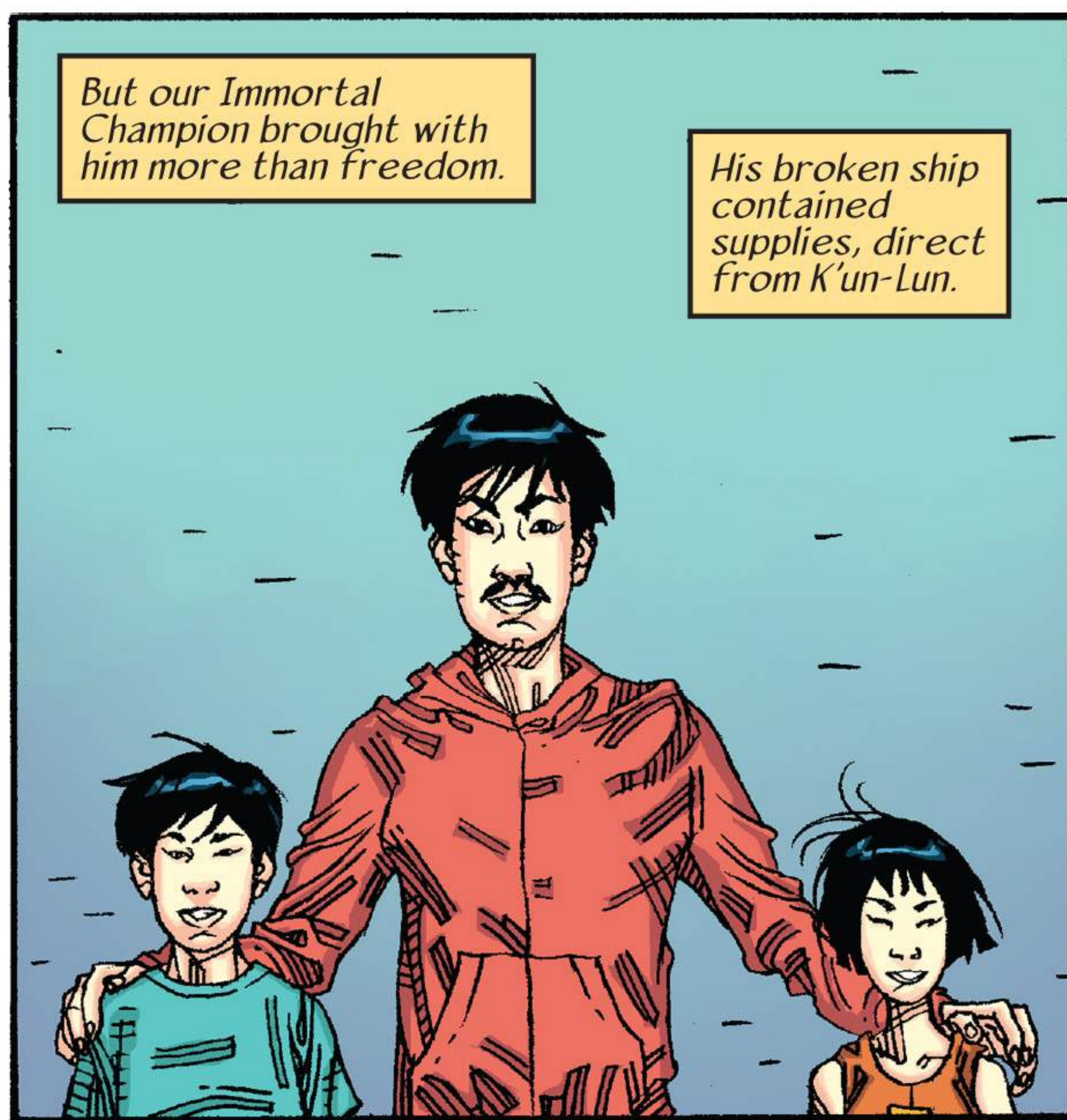
Nothing of the old ways remained.

The president.
His regime.

The Heaven
Center -- all of
it gone.



Including his
unholy Weapon.



But our Immortal
Champion brought with
him more than freedom.

His broken ship
contained
supplies, direct
from K'un-Lun.



Seeds, grains,
and some modest
terraforming
technology.



There was not much,
nor many of us.

But it was
enough.



Eventually I became
President Min Sing-Rand
of the Planet Yaochi.

Our people slowly
returned from the
brink of extinction.

And every day we honor
our Immortal Weapon in
the new land we've made
for ourselves.

It is not Heaven.

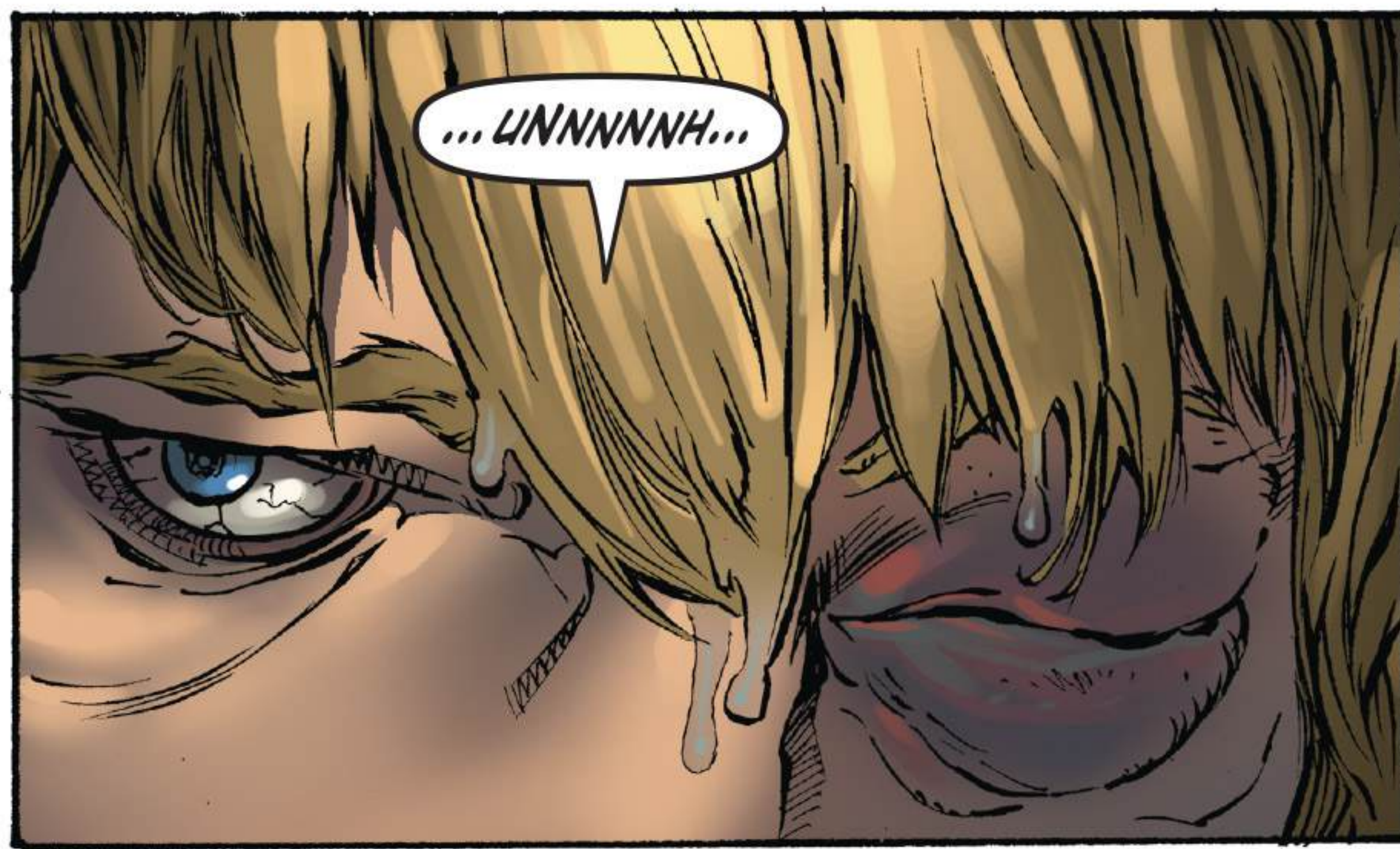
But it is close enough.



THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST
WAH SING-RAND
and the MANDATE of HEAVEN

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22





Takes a few blinks,
but then I confirm it.

Yep. I'm still in **Hell**.



Hell is no sleep.

Hell is a cold bucket of sewer water to wake you the moment you **do** fall asleep.



Hell is not being able to walk straight because you're so exhausted.

UH...



OH, NO. NO RESTING...



THWOK

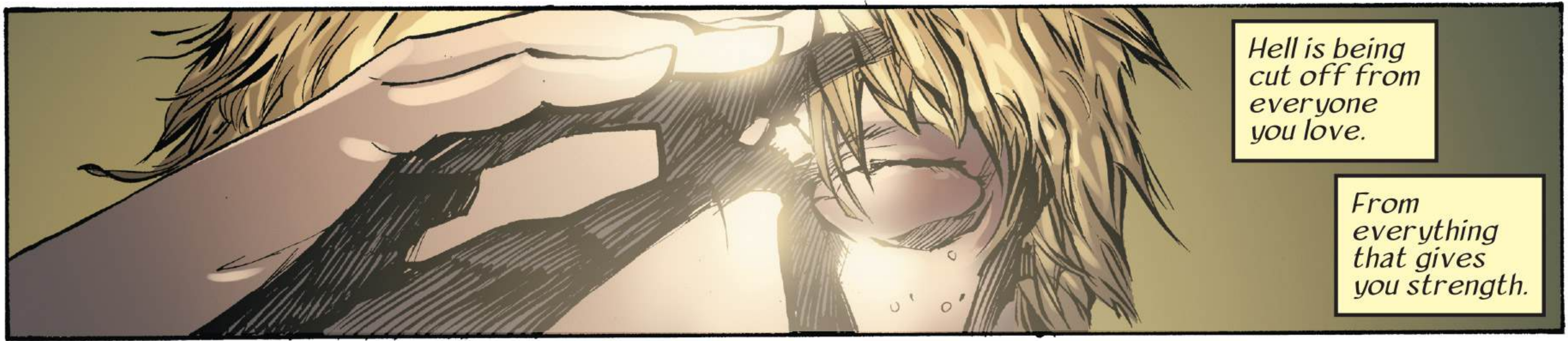


YOU WANT TO FIGHT ME?

Hell is barely being able to lift your arms, because your muscles haven't had enough time to heal.



YOU ARE NOTHING. WOULDN'T WASTE TIME FIGHTING THE LIKES OF YOU.



Hell is being cut off from everyone you love.

From everything that gives you strength.

My name is
Danny Rand.

And there appears to be
no hope in Hell I'm ever
getting out of here



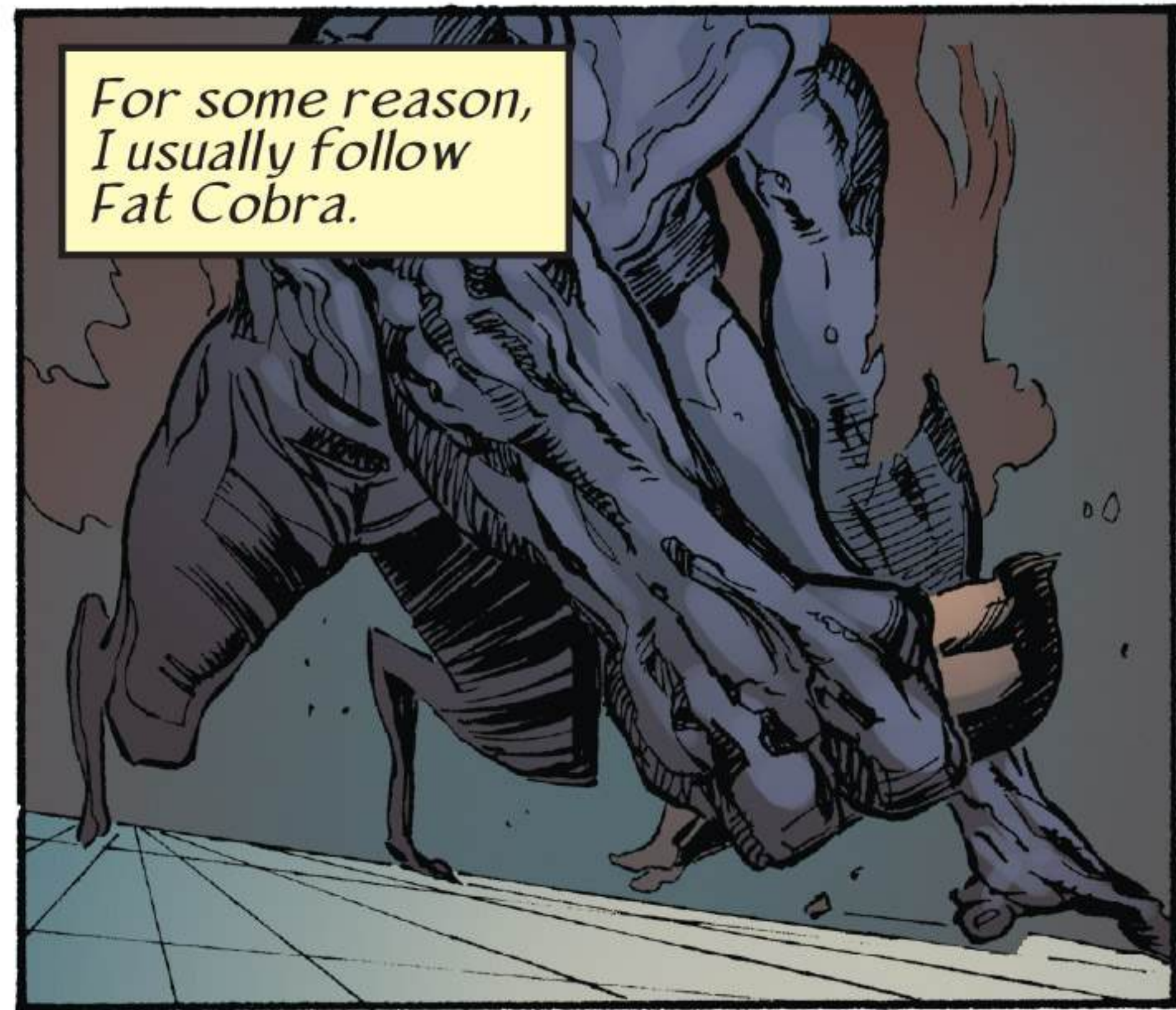
I've been brought out to fight yet another monster.

I've been doing this for... honestly, I don't even know.

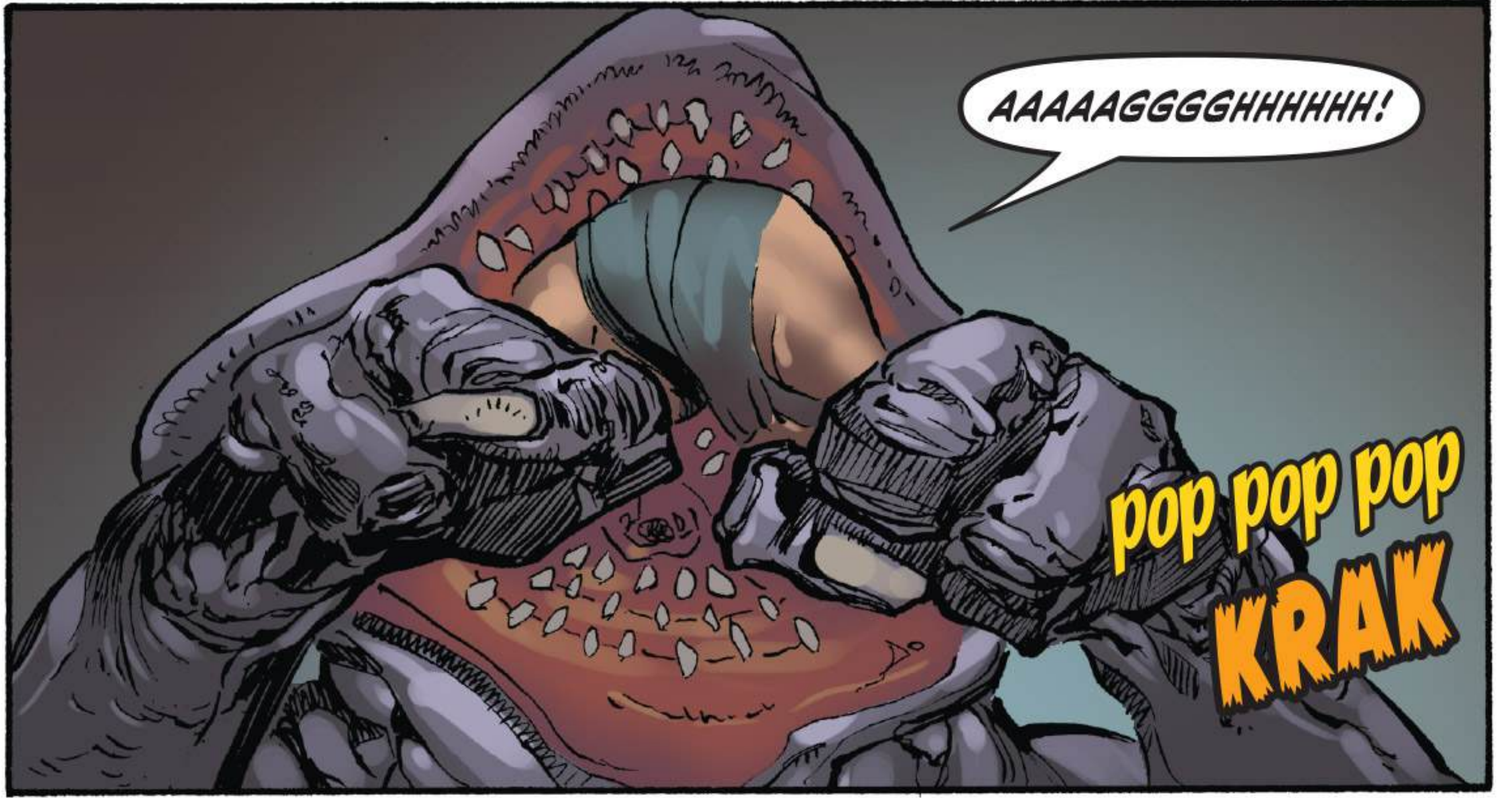
Could be a few weeks. Could be a few **centuries**.



They have all of us Immortal Weapons fighting in nonstop rotations.



For some reason, I usually follow Fat Cobra.



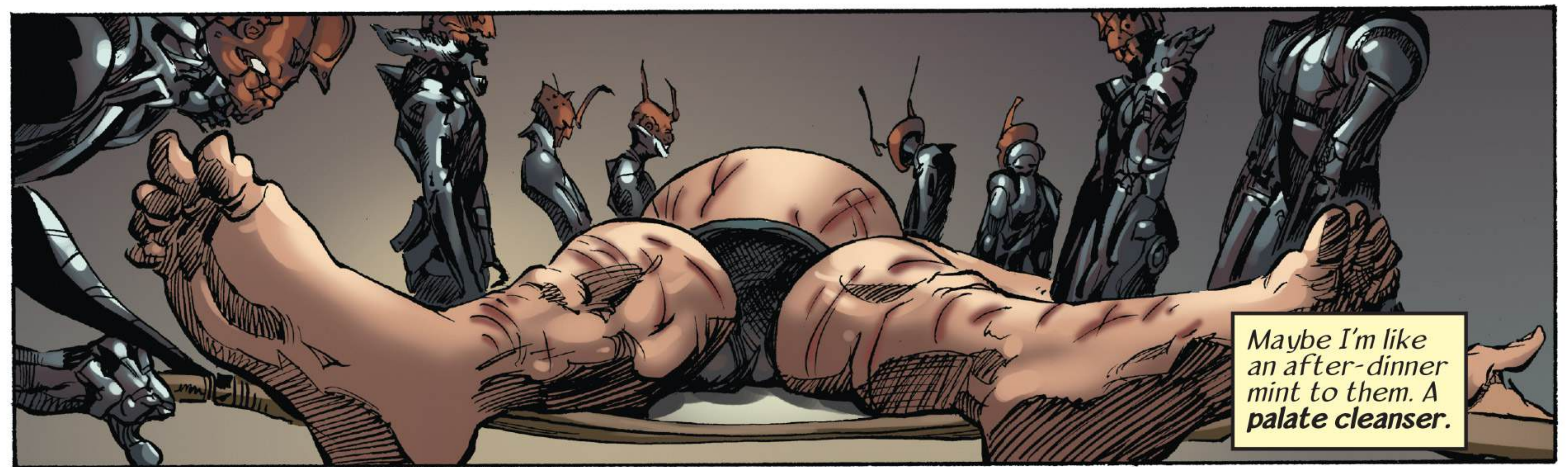
AAAAAGGGGHHHHH!

pop pop pop
KRAK



HEY!

UH-UH. YOU'LL GET YOUR TURN, BLONDIE.



Maybe I'm like an after-dinner mint to them. A **palate cleanser**.



A
LITTLE TIP,
DANNY.
HE
LIKES TO
GRAB.

NOTED,
THANK--



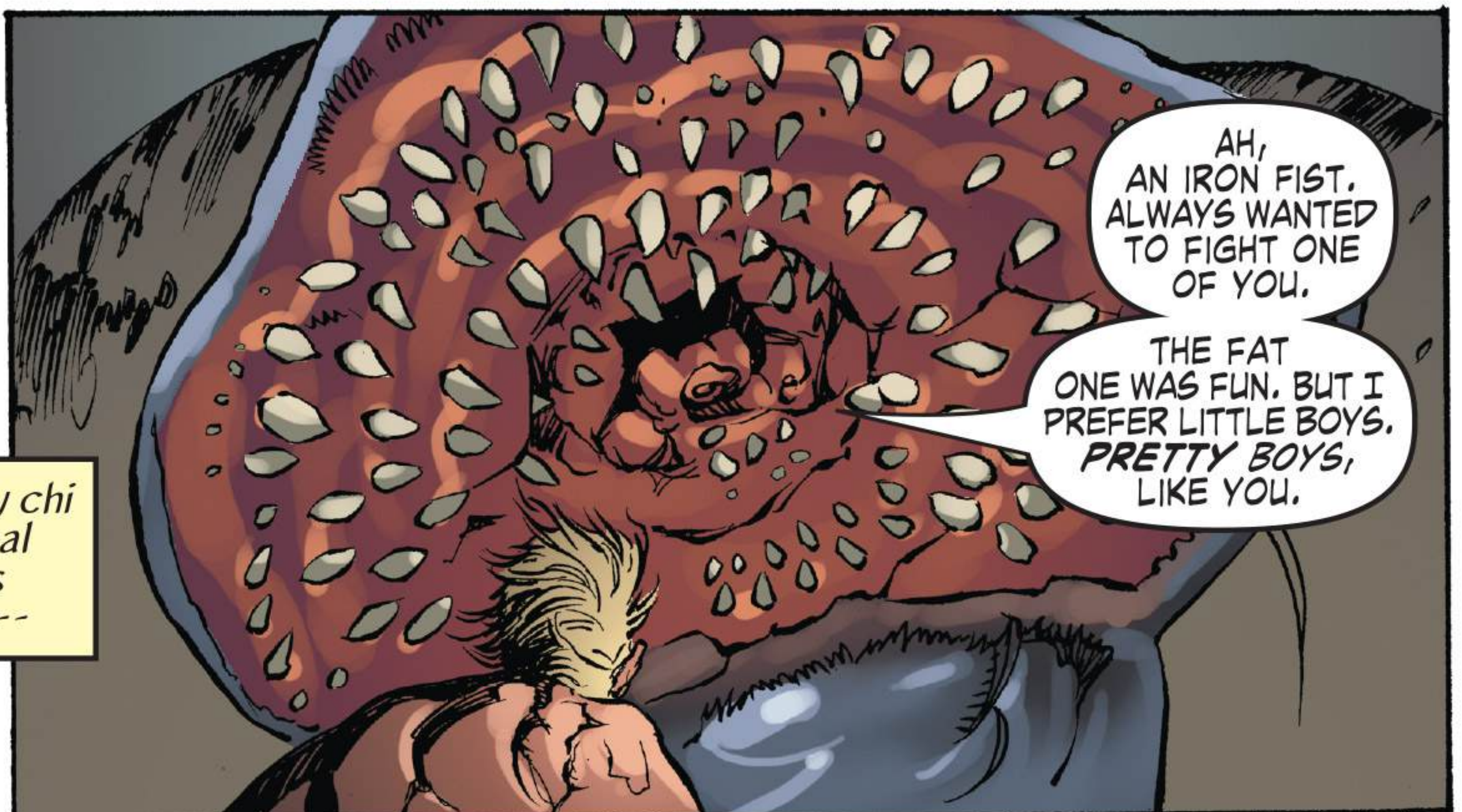
NO
TALKING!
YOU GO.

I know there's a way out
of here. There has to be.

I could probably think of one, if
I had any time to recover from
these relentless challenges.



To give my chi
time to heal
my mind as
well as my--



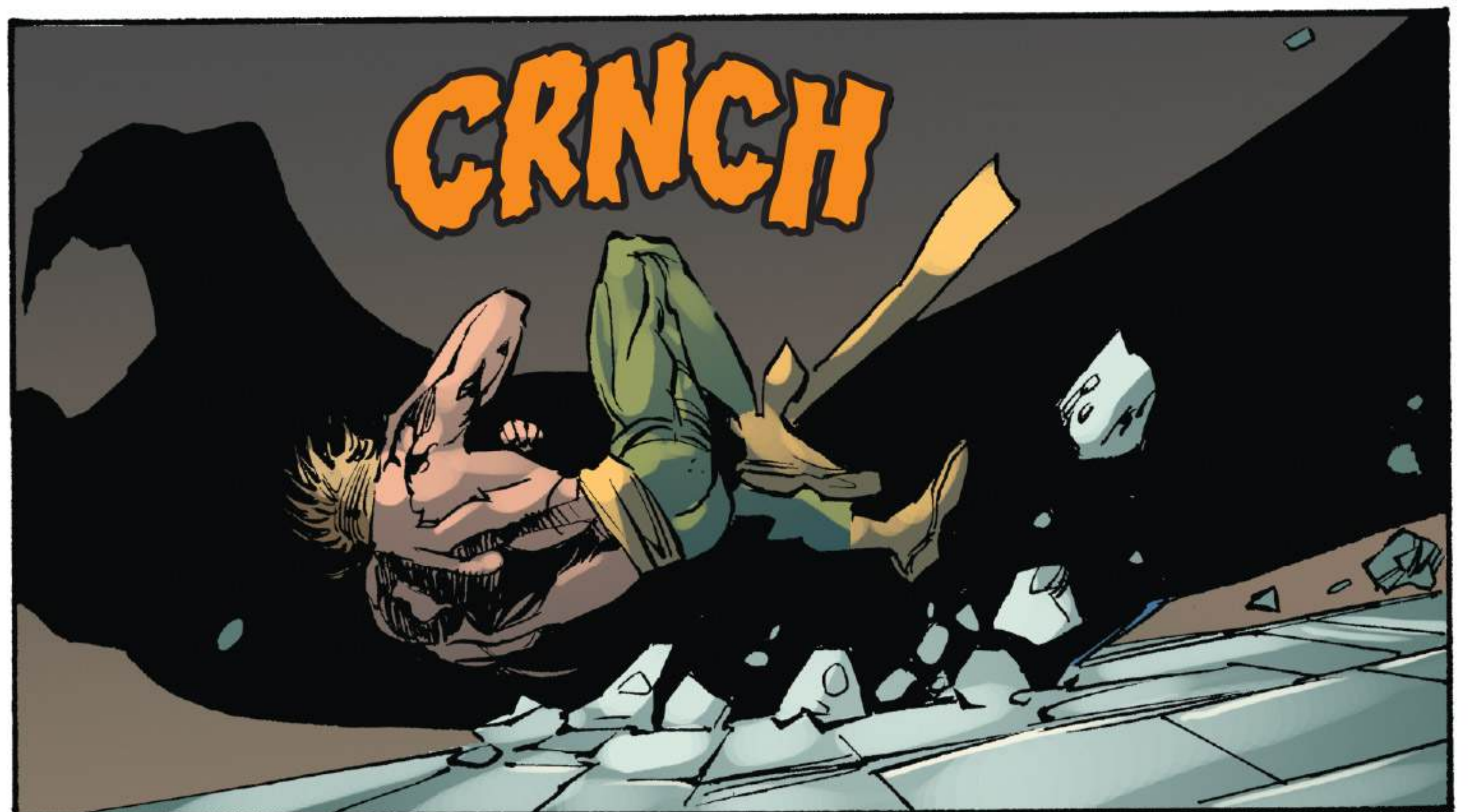
AH,
AN IRON FIST.
ALWAYS WANTED
TO FIGHT ONE
OF YOU.

THE FAT
ONE WAS FUN, BUT I
PREFER LITTLE BOYS,
PRETTY BOYS,
LIKE YOU.



I just need a minute to think.

Just one lousy
minute...



CRUNCH



What the hell
was I thinking,
anyway?

New York City.
A few weeks ago.

COLOGNE?

YOU'RE TRAVELING TO A MYSTICAL CITY THAT'S BEEN HIDDEN FOR CENTURIES AND YOU'RE SERIOUSLY PACKING... COLOGNE?

IT'S NOT FOR ME. YOU EVER SPEND AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME NEXT TO FAT COBRA?

LIKE, SAY, AN 18-HOUR PLANE RIDE?

RIIIGHT.

I'M STILL THINKING ABOUT YOUR OFFER.

WHAT OFFER?

YOU *KNOW* WHAT OFFER, ABOUT ME MOVING IN WHILE YOU'RE HEADED AWAY--

AHEM--

HI, DANNY.

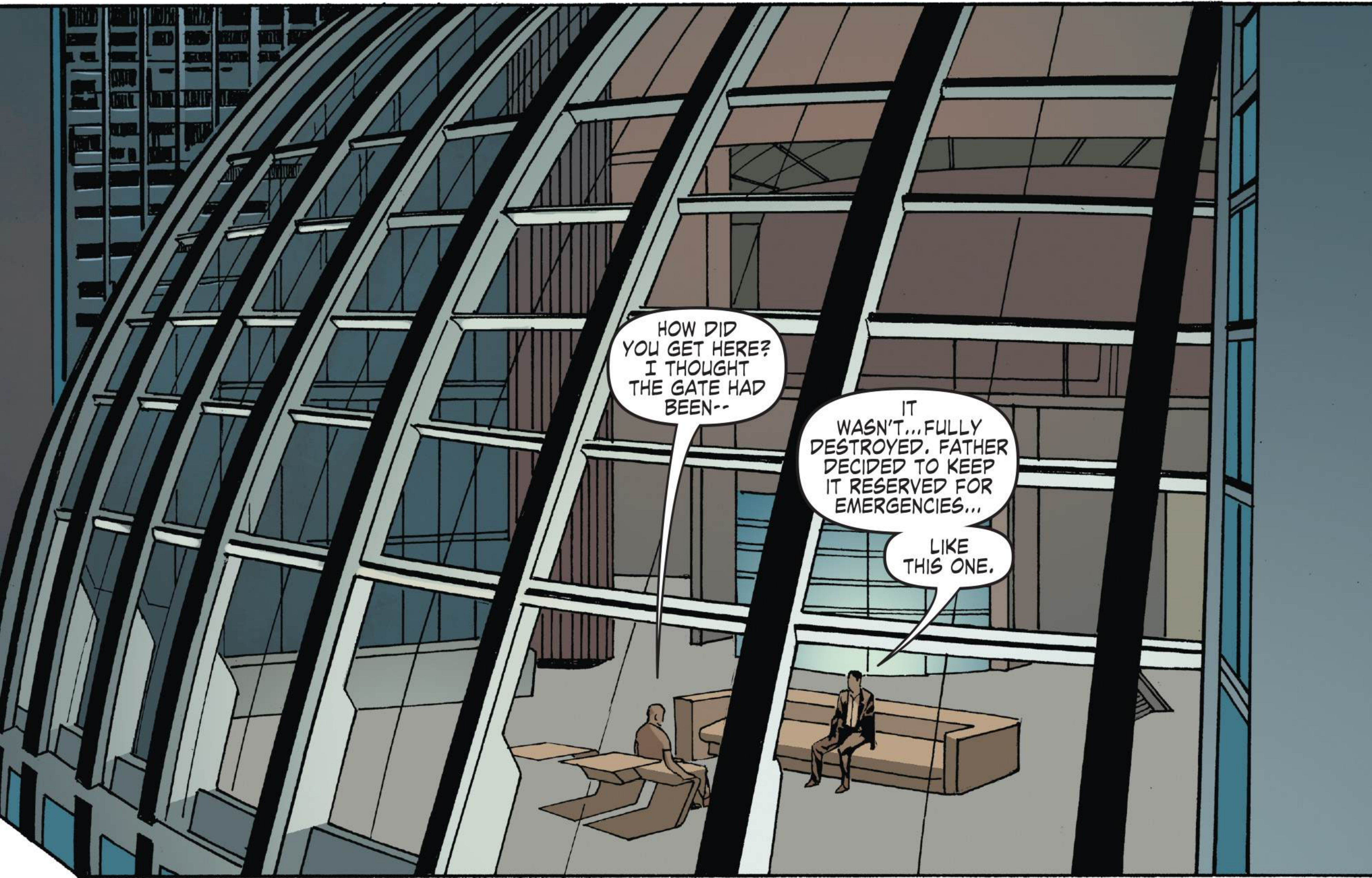
DAVOS.

DAVOS?

MY FATHER SENT ME FROM K'UN-LUN.

MAY WE SPEAK FOR A MOMENT?

GO ON, SUGAR. I'LL FINISH YOUR PACKING.



HOW DID YOU GET HERE? I THOUGHT THE GATE HAD BEEN--

IT WASN'T...FULLY DESTROYED. FATHER DECIDED TO KEEP IT RESERVED FOR EMERGENCIES...

LIKE THIS ONE.



YOU'RE JOURNEYING TO THE EIGHTH CITY, AREN'T YOU?

THE ONE WHICH XAO SPOKE OF?

YOU AND THE WEAPONS LEAVE TONIGHT, CORRECT?



Since we last saw Davos, the other Immortal Weapons from the seven mystical cities joined me in the quest for the rumored **Eighth City**.



I HOPE YOU'RE NOT HERE TO STOP ME.

NO, YOU MISUNDERSTAND. FATHER SENT ME HERE TO ASK YOU TO GO.



HUH?

IT'S INTERESTING; FATE HAS SET BOTH WORLDS ON THE SAME PATH.

READ EFULLY. I'M TO BURN IT ERWARD.

"IT HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTED TO
HOUSE THE MONSTERS, DEMONS AND
CRIMINALS THAT PLAGUED K'UN-LUN
THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO.

"THEY WERE ROUNDED UP
BY THE VERY FIRST
IMMORTAL WEAPONS, AND
BANISHED TO THIS PLACE."

視之內有百餘形類皆然報明列臣竊念
 地方山凹之中內有深坑數餘大深
 不遠於哈爾濱
 目臣一面差撥多弁截路防範無容此數

"IN A WAY. WITH ONE MAJOR DIFFERENCE.

"THE GATEWAY IS ALWAYS OPEN...BUT IN *ONE DIRECTION* ONLY."

"THOSE BANISHED TO
THE EIGHTH CITY HAVE
NEVER, EVER RETURNED.

"UNFORTUNATELY, IT HAS BEEN...**ABUSED** OVER THE CENTURIES.

"THE FORMER LEADER USED THIS FEATURE TO CLEANSE K'UN-LUN OF HIS ENEMIES.

"*ENEMY* BEING A
VERY LOOSE TERM."



YOU MEAN
POLITICAL ENEMIES.
ANYBODY YU-TI JUST
FELT LIKE GETTING
RID OF?

YES. MY
FATHER'S FOUND AN
EXTENSIVE LIST IN YU-TI'S
SECRET PAPERS. A LOT
OF *GOOD PEOPLE*
WERE SENT TO THE
EIGHTH CITY.



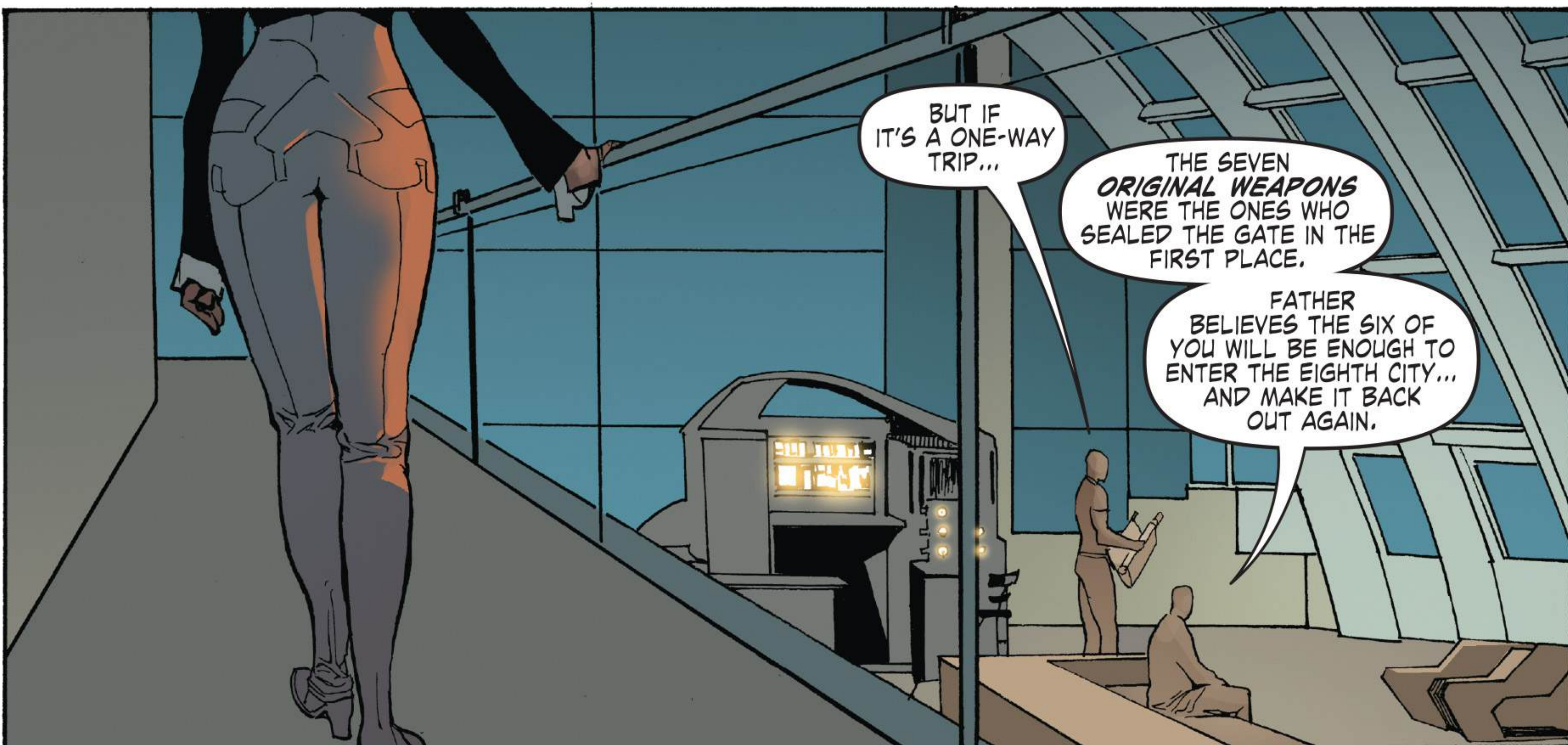
MY GOD,
ALL OF THOSE
PEOPLE.

TRAPPED
IN A CITY OF
MONSTERS.



MY FATHER
WANTS YOU AND
THE OTHER IMMORTAL
WEAPONS TO MOUNT A
RESCUE MISSION TO
THE EIGHTH CITY.

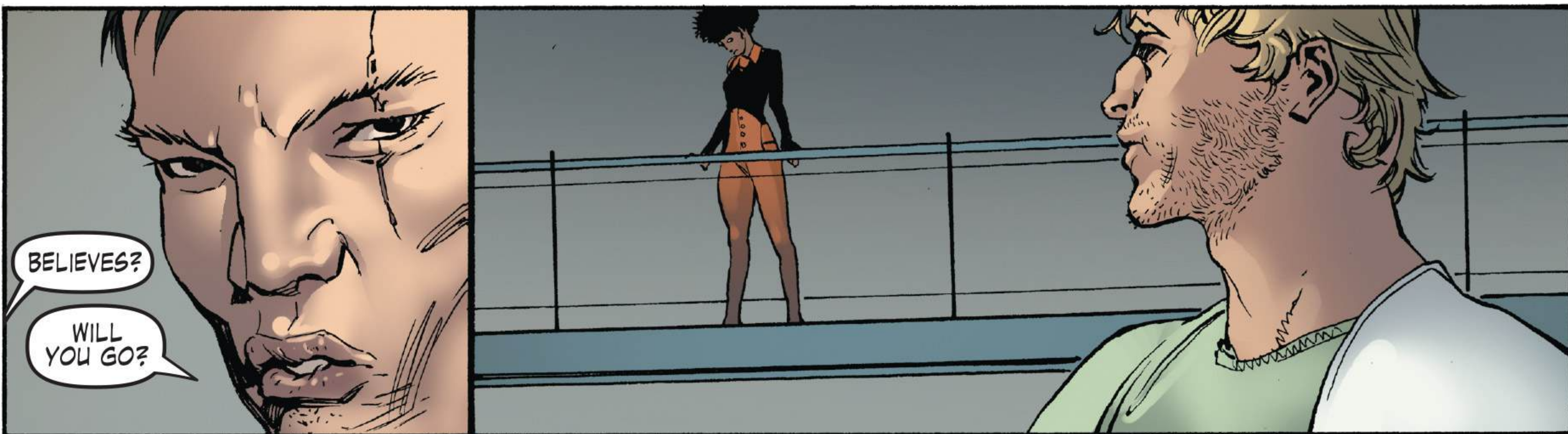
HE CANNOT
BEAR TO HAVE THE
INNOCENT SUFFER
ANY LONGER.



BUT IF
IT'S A ONE-WAY
TRIP...

THE SEVEN
ORIGINAL WEAPONS
WERE THE ONES WHO
SEALED THE GATE IN THE
FIRST PLACE.

FATHER
BELIEVES THE SIX OF
YOU WILL BE ENOUGH TO
ENTER THE EIGHTH CITY...
AND MAKE IT BACK
OUT AGAIN.



BELIEVES?

WILL
YOU GO?

A few weeks ago.

Of course we went.
We were going anyway.

We journeyed to
the gate, deep in
the mountains of
the remotest
corner of China.

A place so
remote, even God
hasn't thought
about it lately.

Normally the trip from New York
would have meant a 22-hour plane
ride, a four-hour drive down a
paved road, and a 10-hour drive
on a dirt road, followed by five
days of hiking and climbing.

Thanks to the company's
executive jet, we were
able to shave a few hours
off the plane ride. Go us.

OKAY...
NOW
WHAT?

THE THUNDERER
SAID THE ORIGINAL
WEAPONS CLOSED
THE GATE.

MAYBE WE
SHOULD ALL
TRY OPENING IT...
AT THE SAME
TIME.

LIKE WE'RE
A HUMAN KEY, OR
SOMETHING.

GET
READY,
AND...

PULL!

≡GASP≡

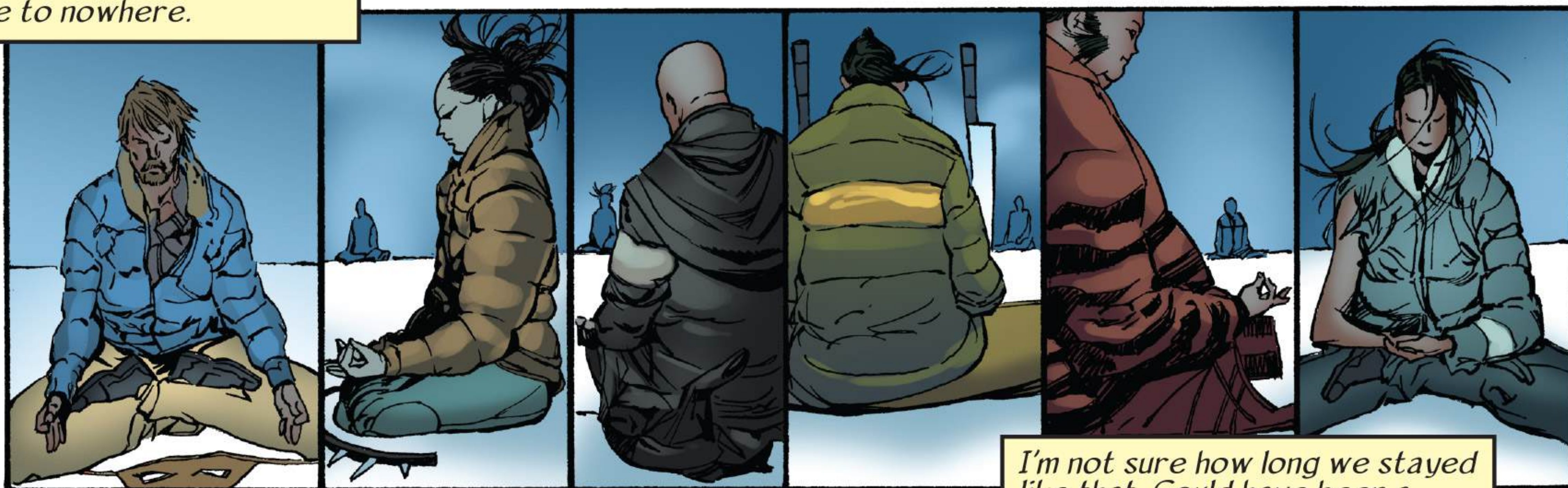
RIGHT.



We tried another strategy.

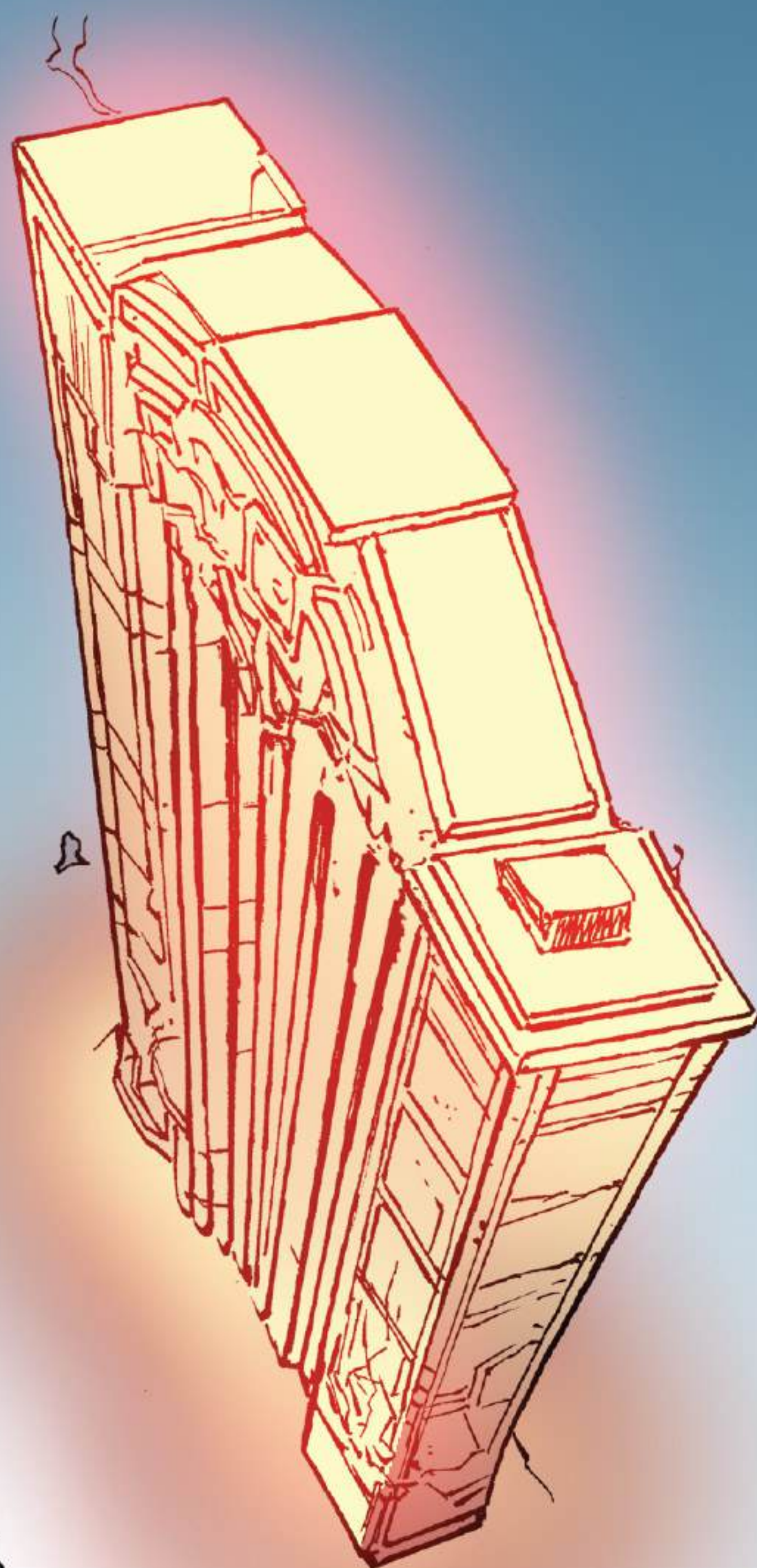
OKAY, PLAN B.

We sat down and channeled our chi, and focused on that gate to nowhere.

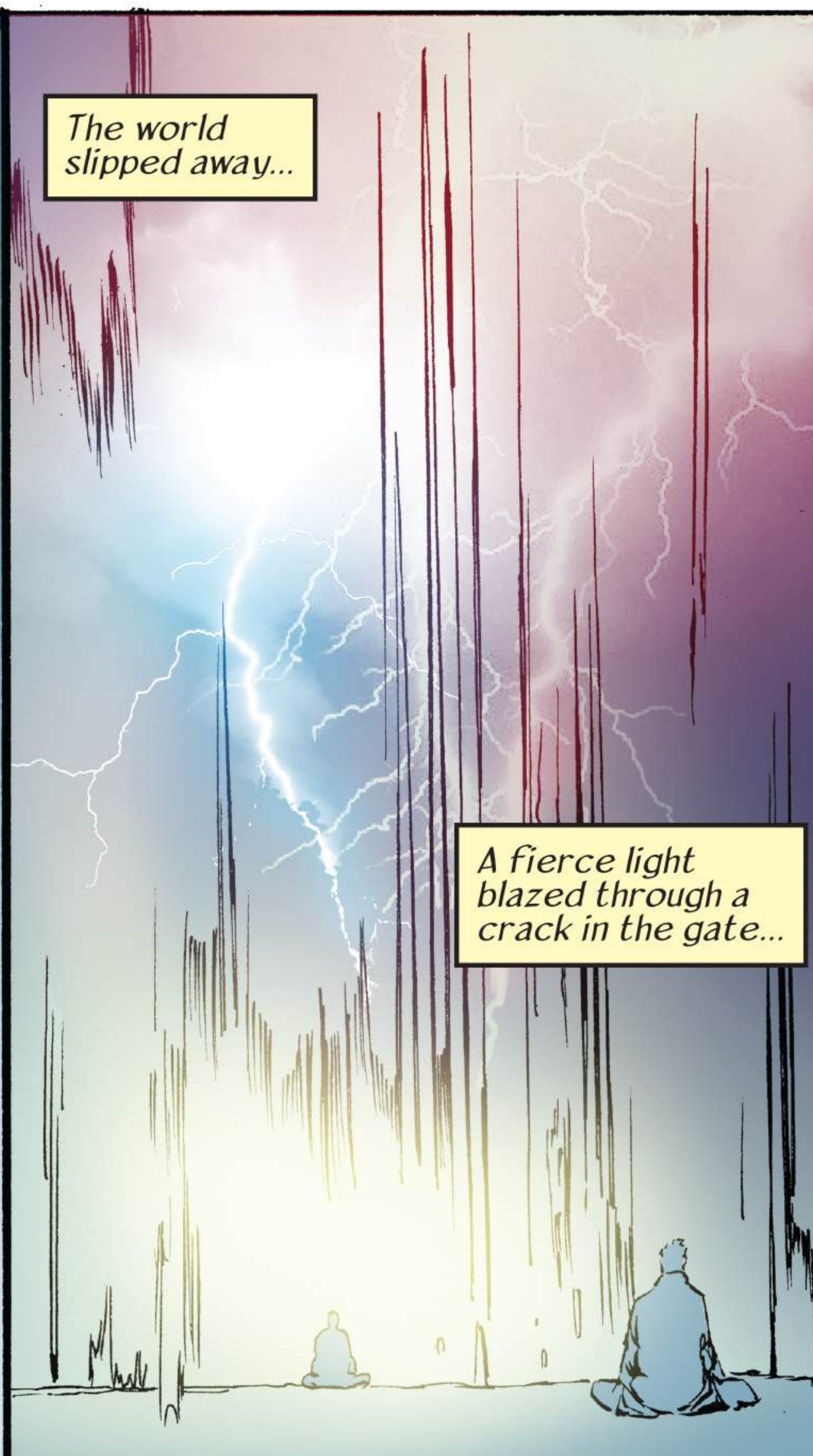


I'm not sure how long we stayed like that. Could have been a matter of hours. Maybe days.

But slowly, something began to happen...



The world slipped away...



A fierce light blazed through a crack in the gate...

And then...





We fell.

I think we fell for as long as we meditated. Maybe even longer.

I caught glimpses of the others, but like me, they were struggling to keep it together.

My stomach felt like it had broken free and gotten stuck somewhere up in my throat.

It felt like we fell forever.



OH MAN.



⟨UP,
YOU CUR.⟩*

*Translated from Chinese --Ed.



CUR?

HEY,
IT'S AN INSULT
TO ME, TOO.



KRAK

KRAK



⟨WAIT.⟩



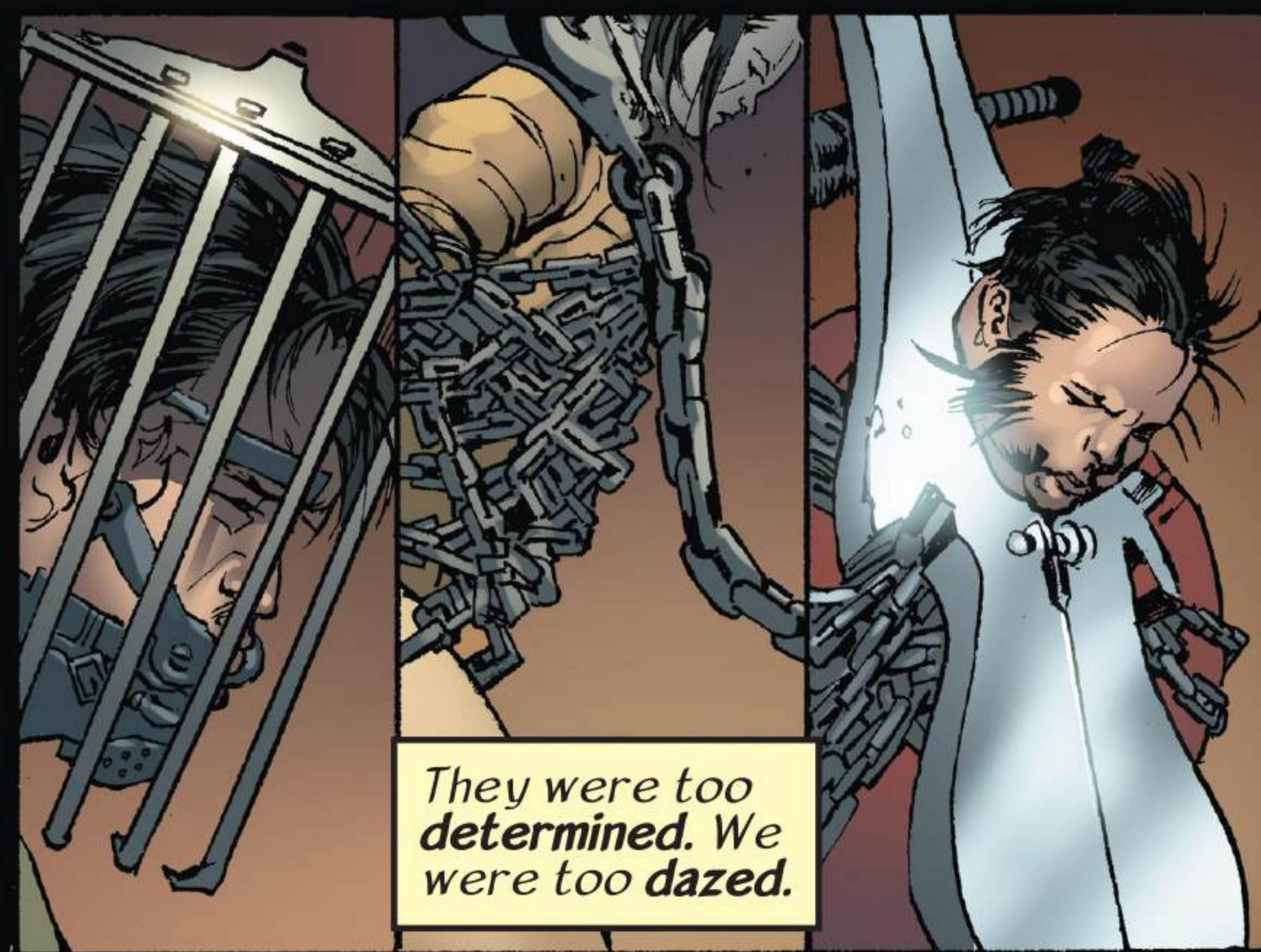
⟨THESE
AREN'T MERE
PRISONERS...⟩



We were too weak,
and there were too
many of them.



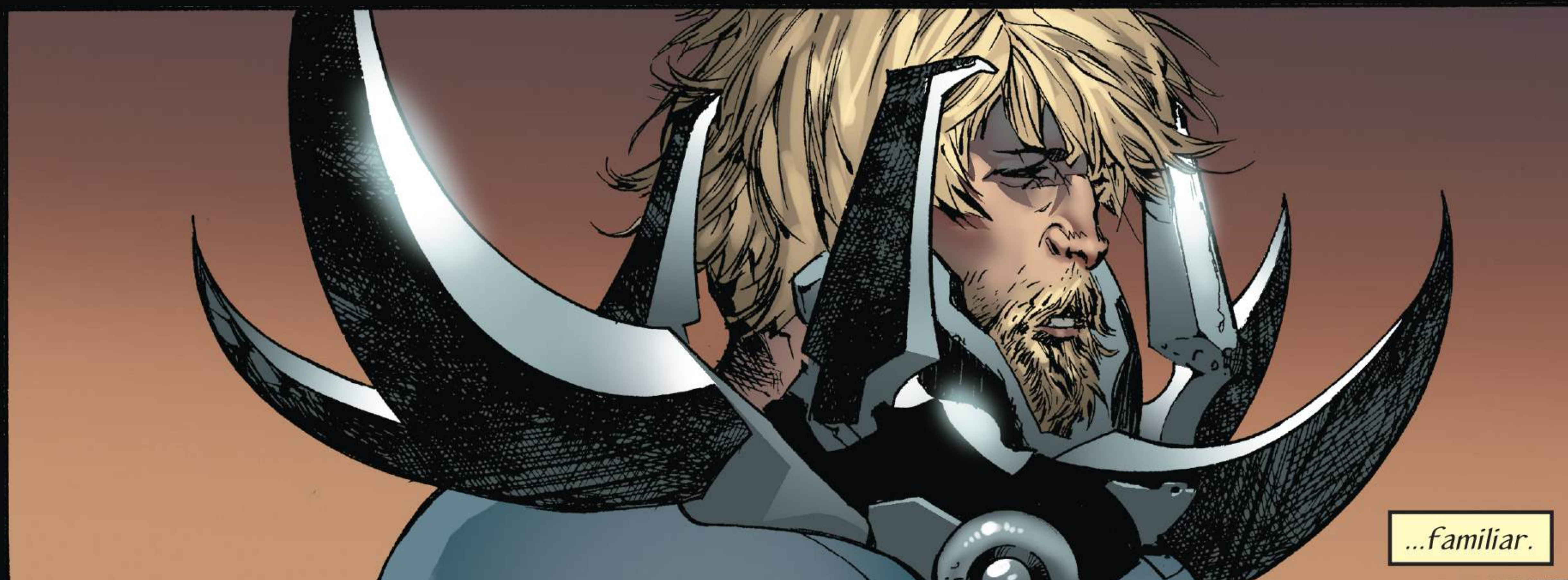
〈THE
PROPHECY IS TRUE!
THESE ARE THE
WEAPONS FROM
ABOVE!〉



They were too
determined. We
were too **dazed**.



The strangest thing was that
all of this somehow felt oddly...

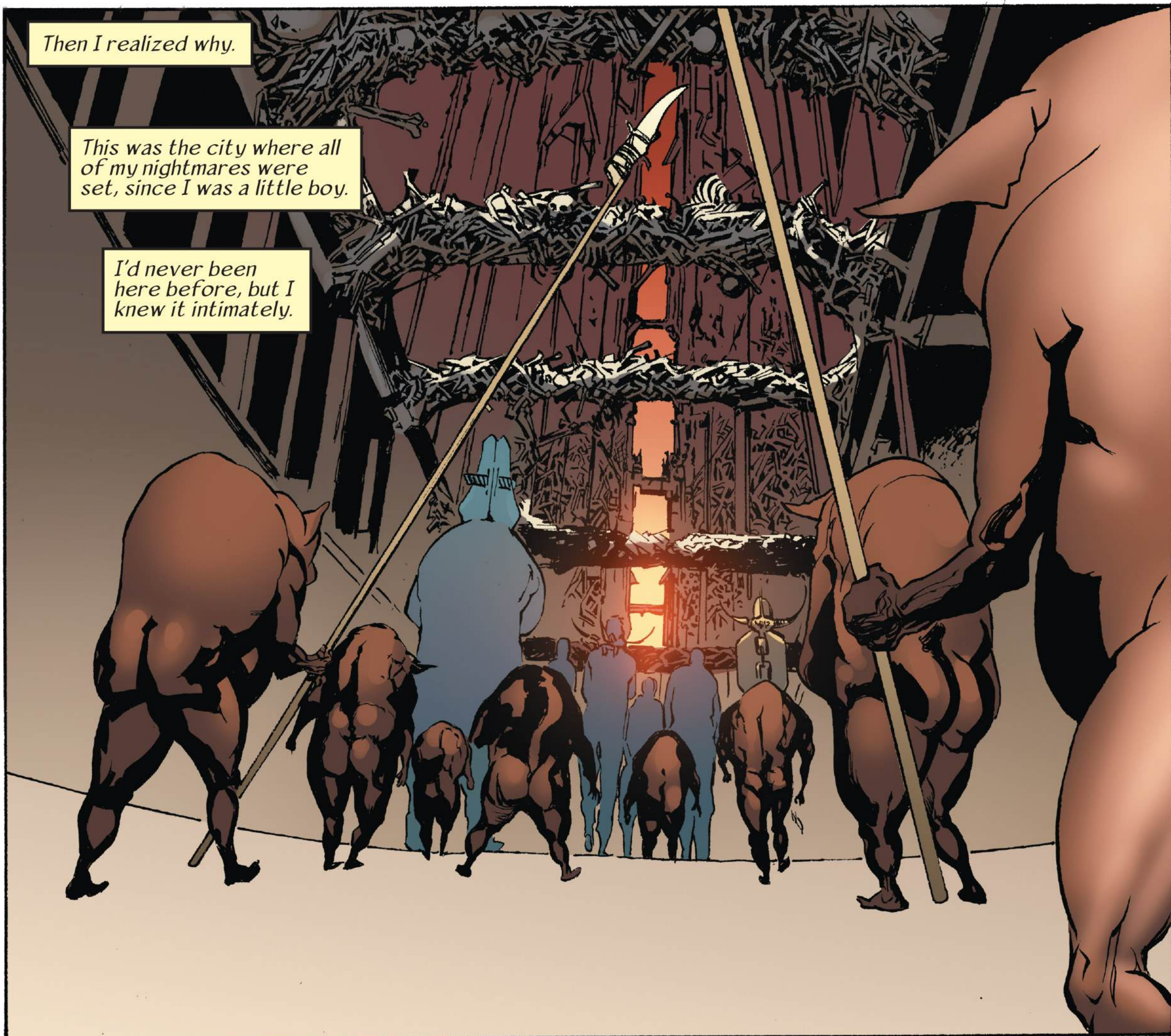


...familiar.

Then I realized why.

This was the city where all of my nightmares were set, since I was a little boy.

I'd never been here before, but I knew it intimately.



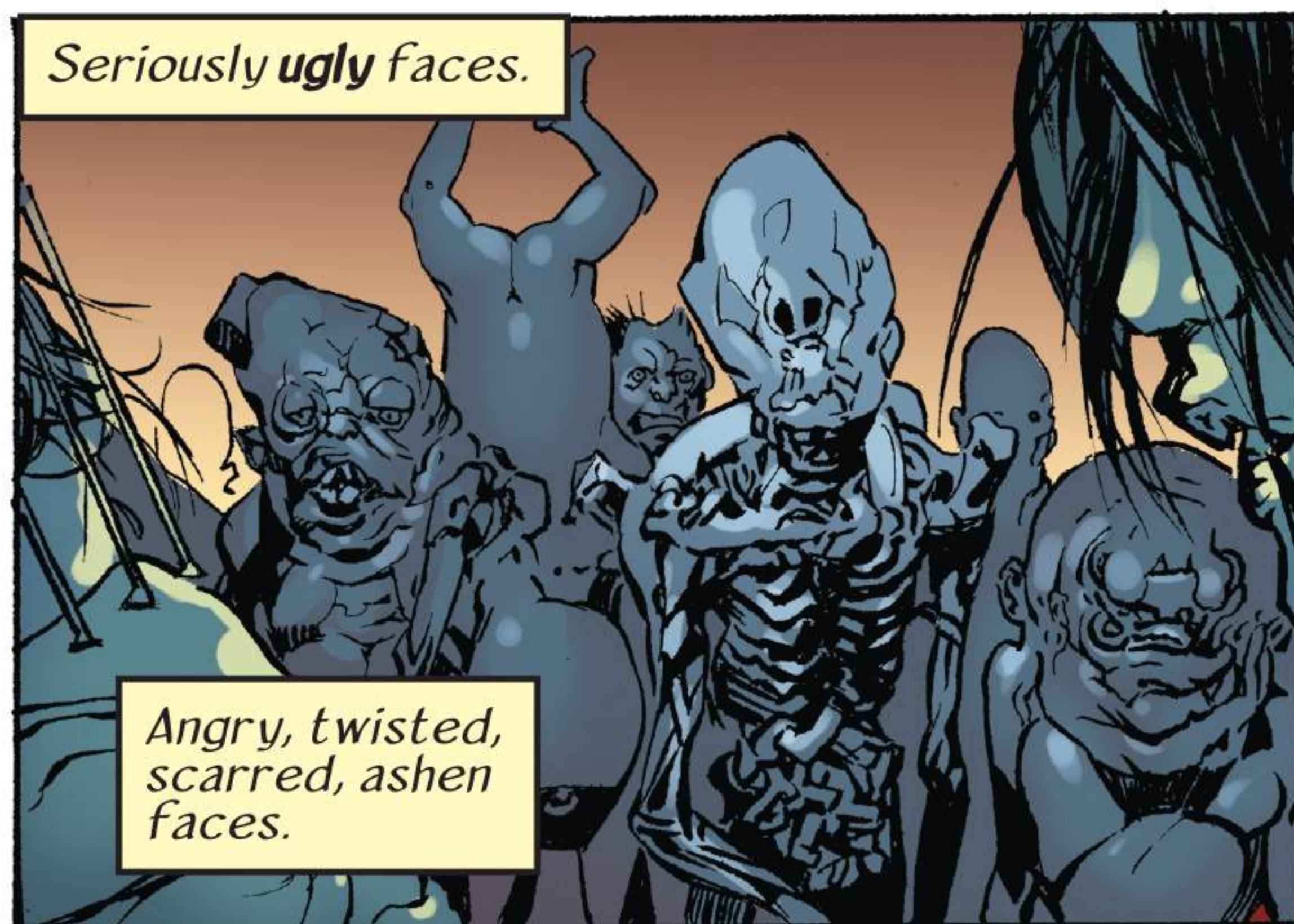
Word spread quickly.

More and more faces appeared by the side of the road.

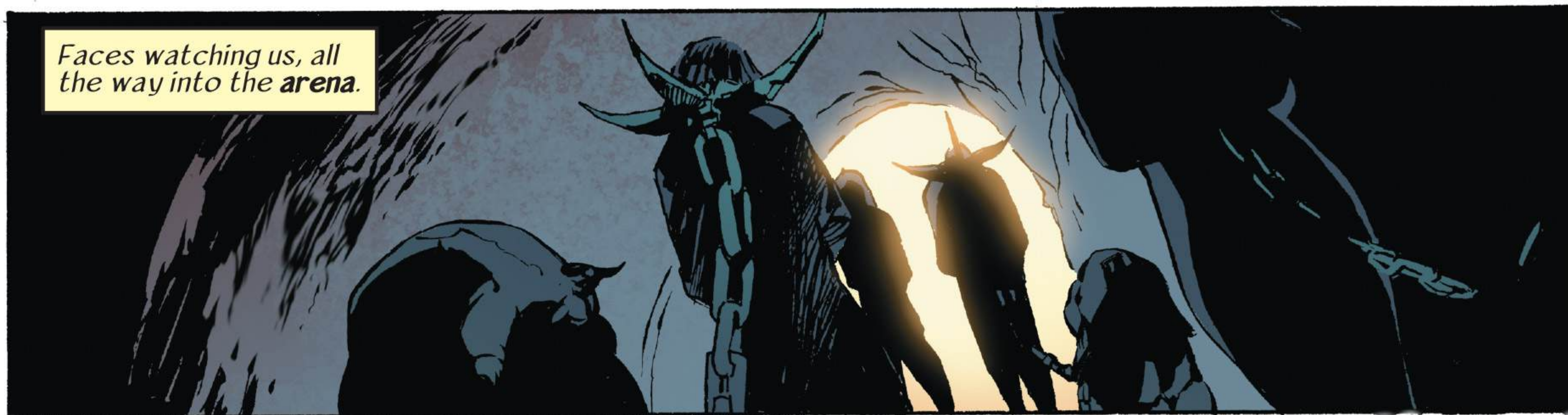


Seriously **ugly** faces.

Angry, twisted, scarred, ashen faces.



Faces watching us, all the way into the **arena**.







LET US FIND OUT.

And that's when the true torments began.



We quickly realized that the monsters lined up inside the arena weren't front-row-seat-holders--Hell's version of luxury sky-boxes.

They were **opponents**.

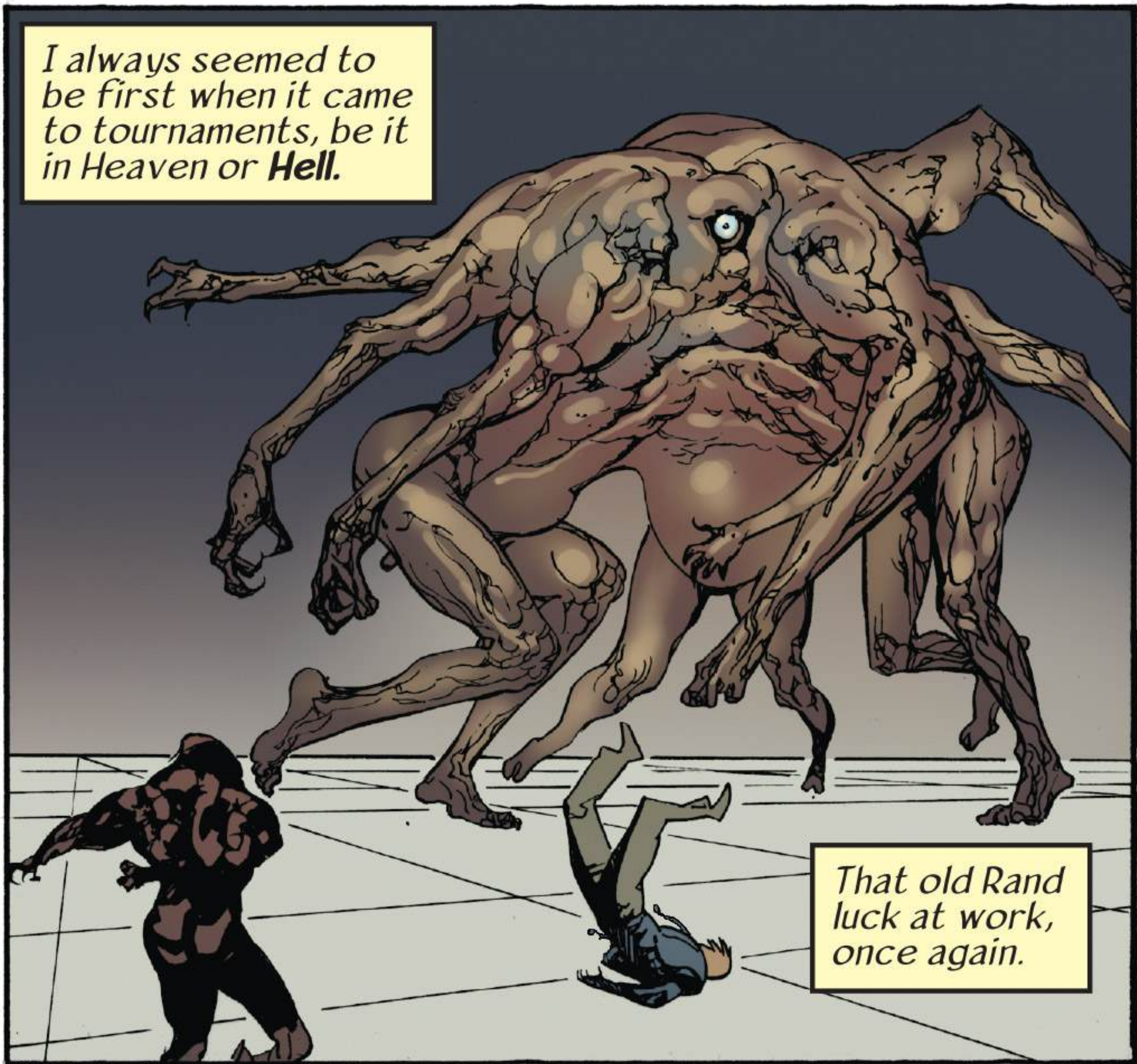
All waiting for their crack at us.



THE SKINNY ONE FIRST. THE... IRON FIST.



WHO... ME?

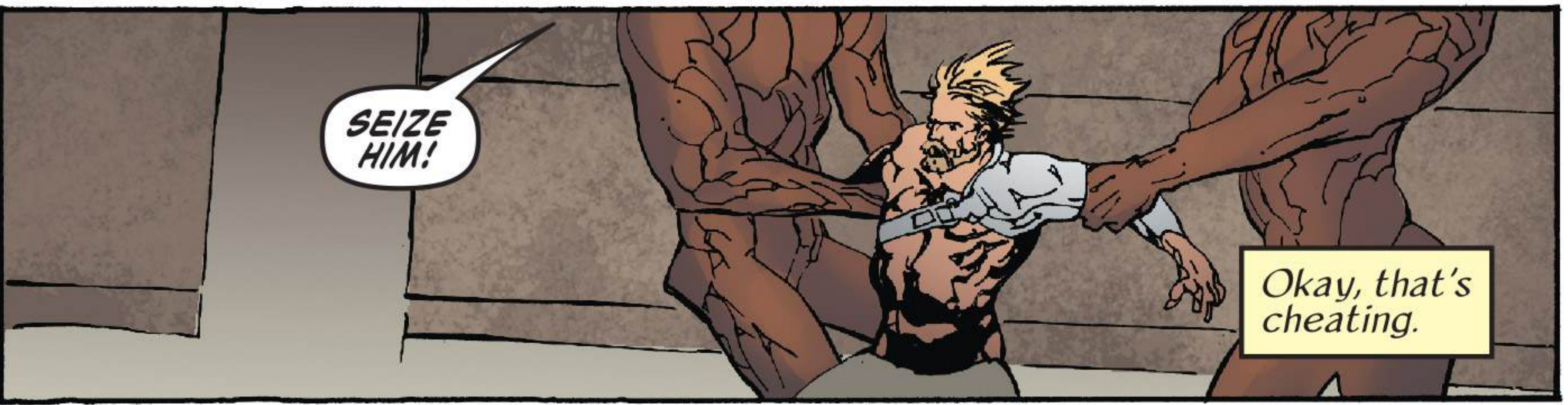
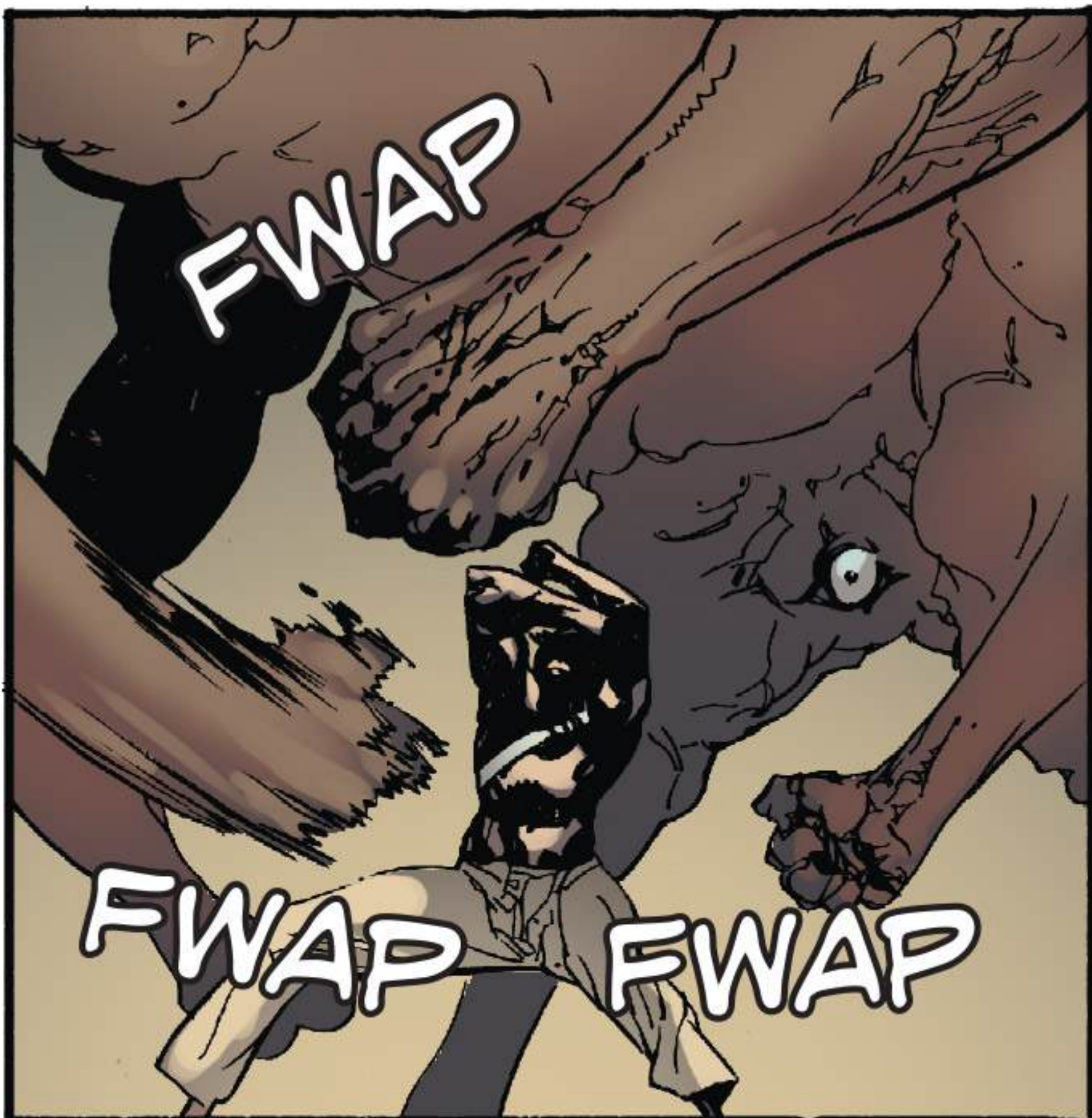
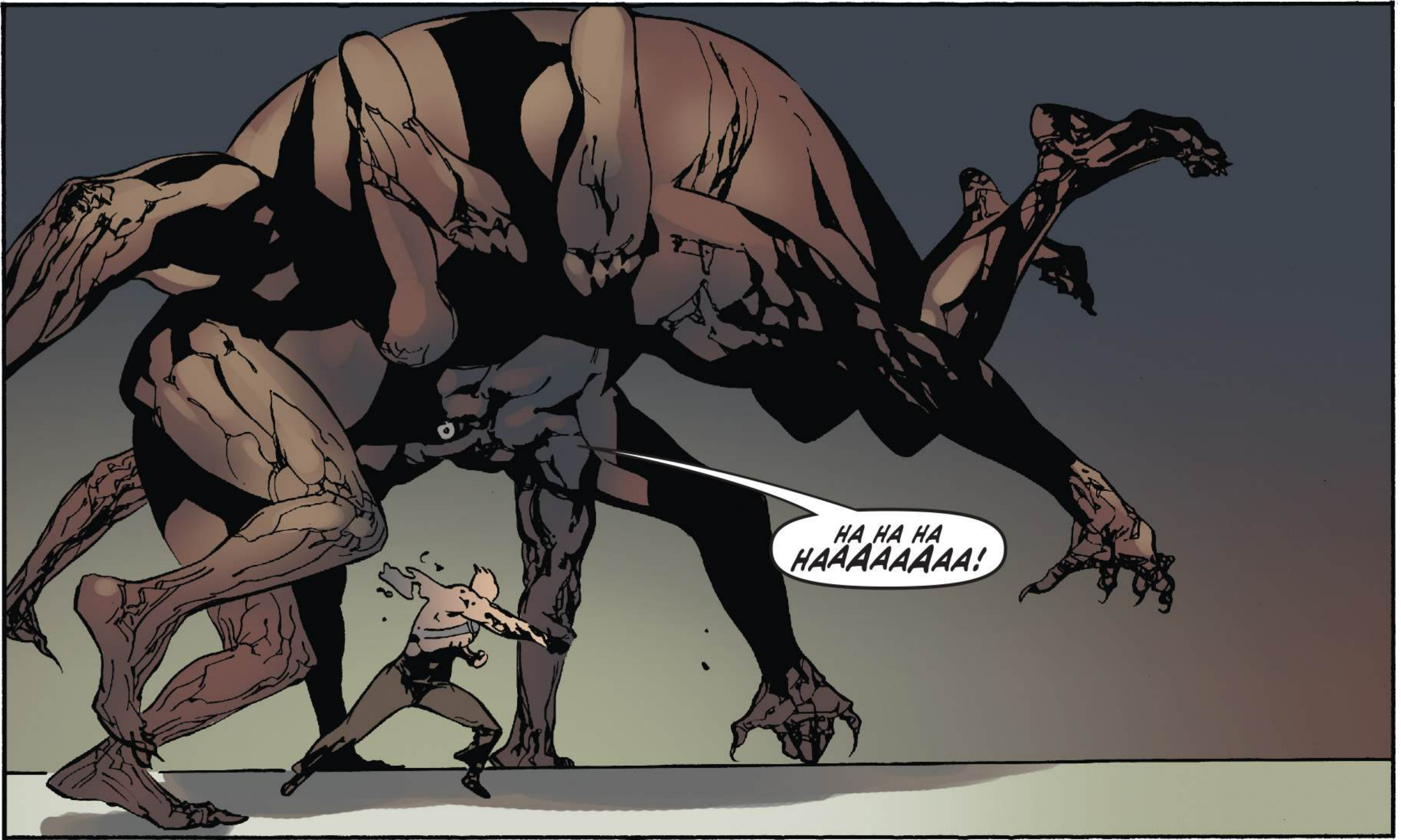


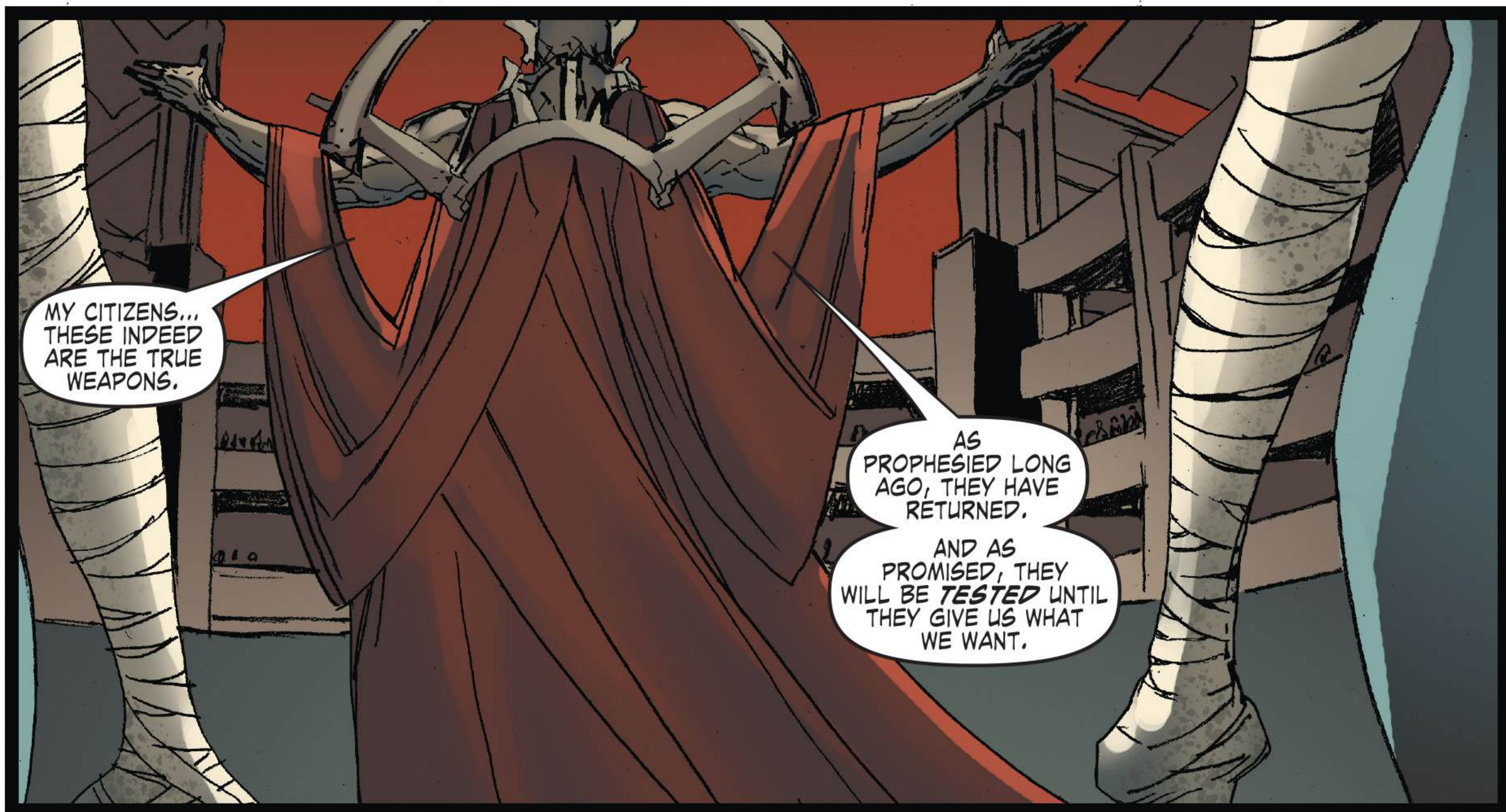
I always seemed to be first when it came to tournaments, be it in Heaven or **Hell**.

That old Rand luck at work, once again.



But this time... I was **eager** to fight.





MY CITIZENS...
THESE INDEED
ARE THE TRUE
WEAPONS.

AS
PROPHESED LONG
AGO, THEY HAVE
RETURNED.

AND AS
PROMISED, THEY
WILL BE *TESTED* UNTIL
THEY GIVE US WHAT
WE WANT.



WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?



WE'LL
LET YOU
KNOW.



That's when
the relentless
pattern began.

Endless fights,
which always
seem to stop
just at the
brink of death.



COWARD!
BACK TO YOUR
FIGHT!



KRAK



Giving us just enough time to heal
before the next round of fights.



I suppose outright **killing us** would ruin the fun.



We were kept far from each other-- too far to communicate.

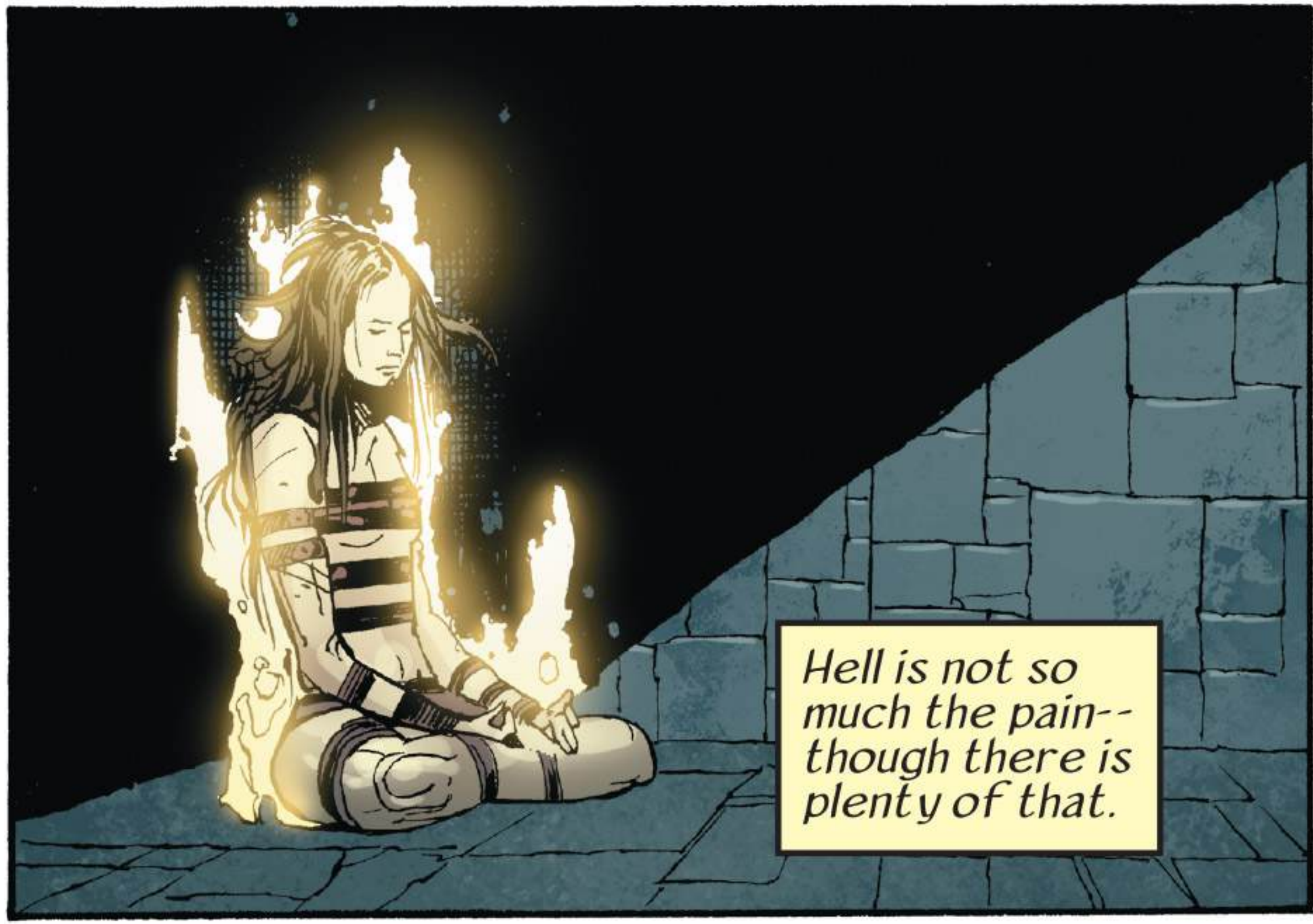


I couldn't even **feel** the presence of the others... which was weird.

I could only imagine they were enduring the same kind of torture.



Hours and days and weeks on end. Just like me.



Hell is not so much the pain-- though there is plenty of that.



TIME TO PLAY, PRETTY ONE.

Hell is the **monotony**.

NOW.

And then, after what seemed like an eternity... there was something that was very much **not** monotony.

TAP
TAP
TAP

A faint tapping.

At first I thought it was an insect or something, but then I started to recognize a pattern.

It was a message...in Chinese. One of the other Weapons, maybe?

TAP
TAP
TAP

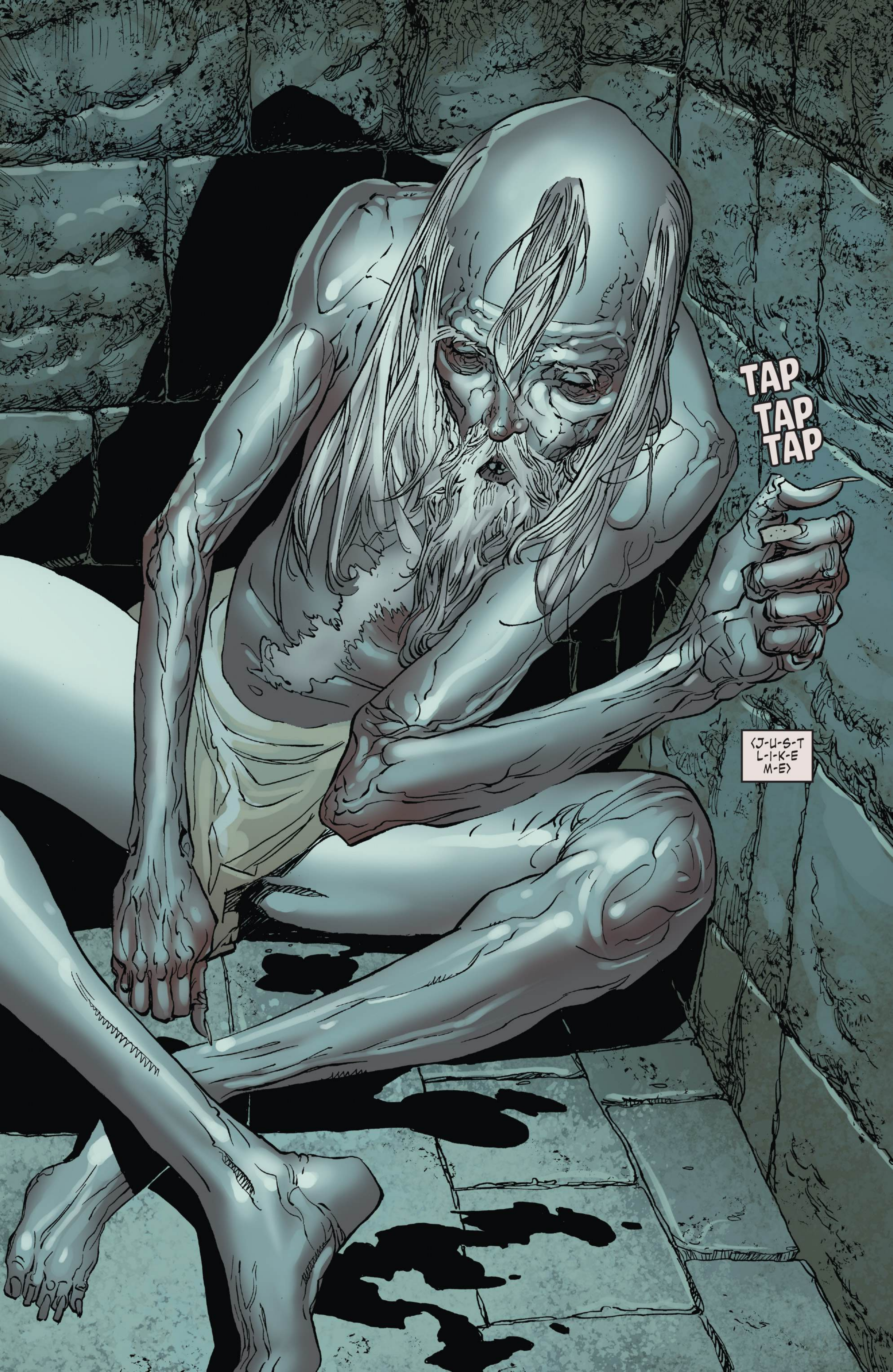
<I K-N-O-W
W-H-A-T
Y-O-U
A-R-E>

TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP

<W-H-O
A-R-E
Y-O-U>

TAP
TAP
TAP

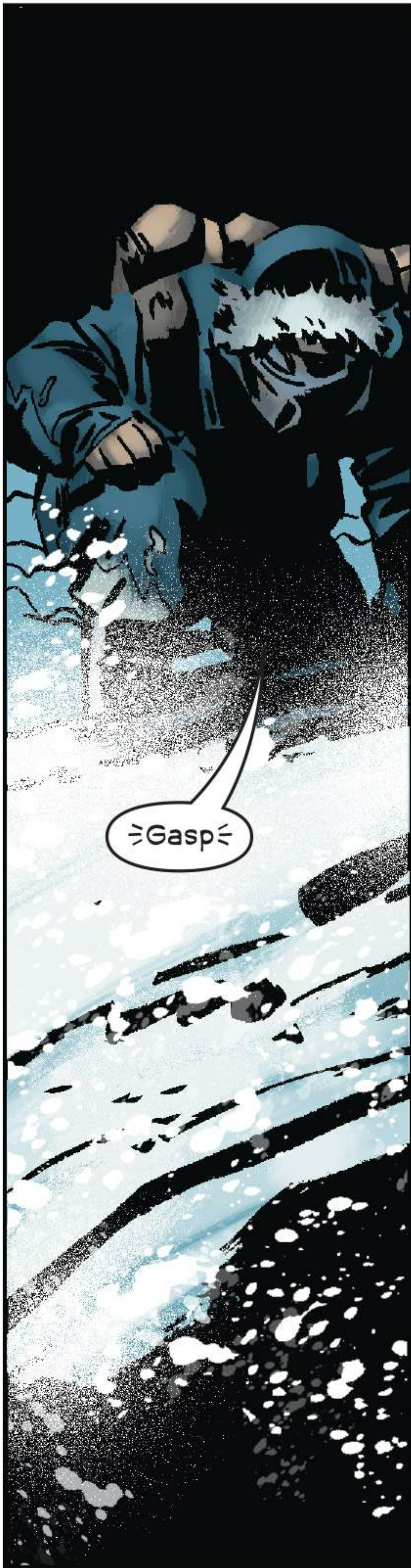
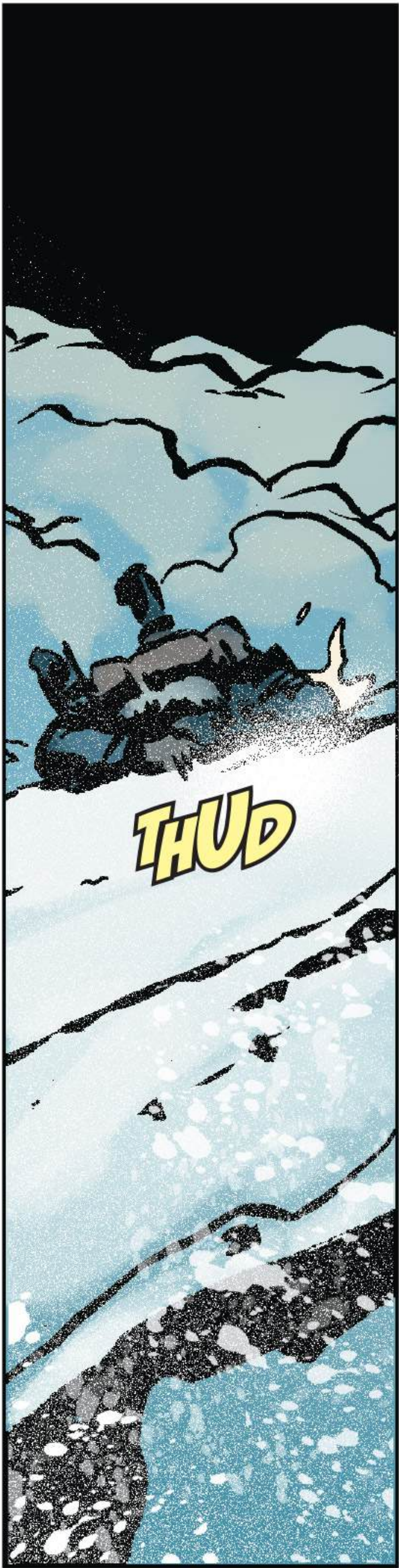
<Y-O-U
A-R-E
A-N
I-R-O-N
F-I-S-T>

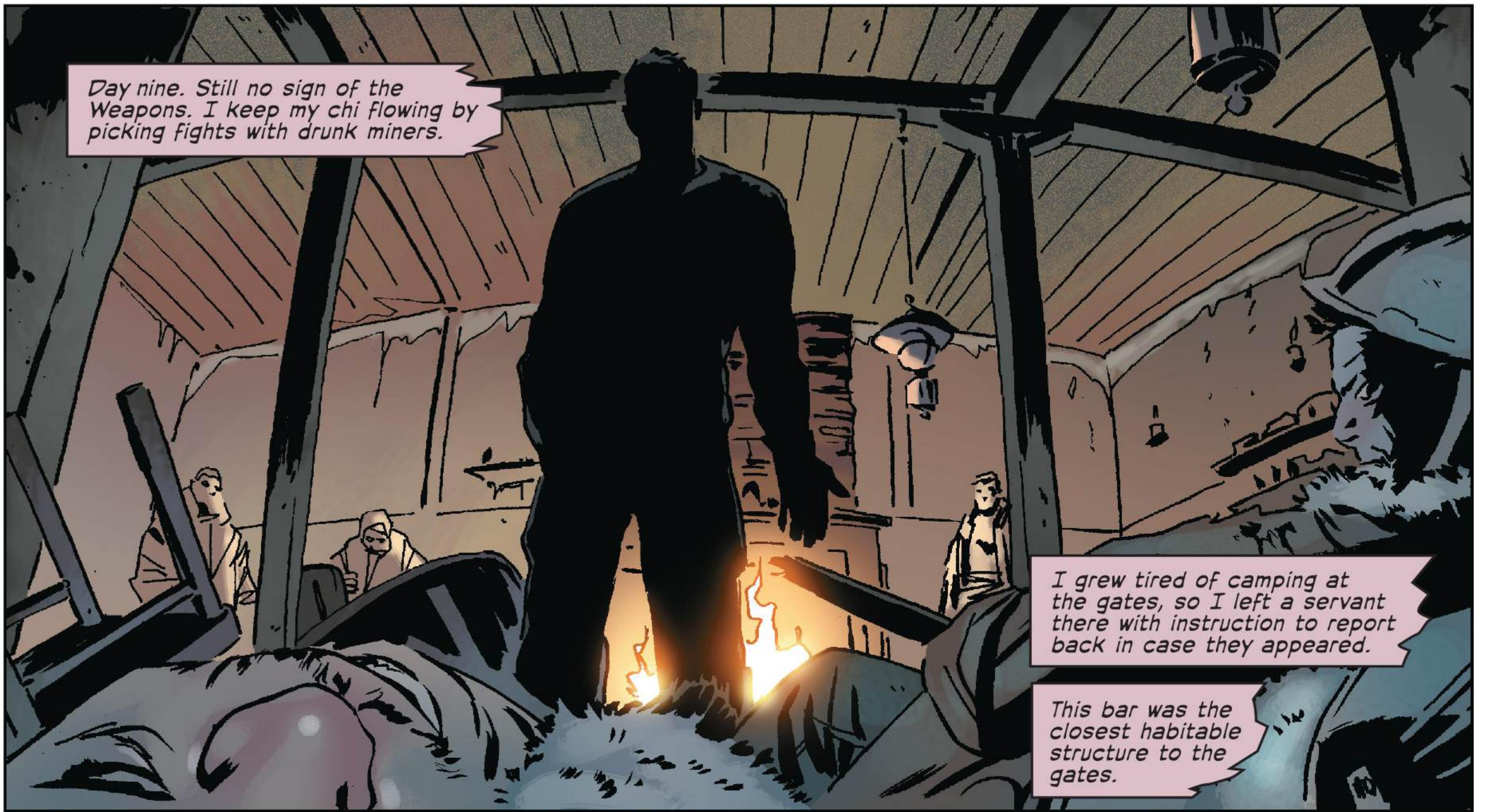


**TAP
TAP
TAP**

**<J-U-S-T
L-I-K-E
M-E>**







Day nine. Still no sign of the Weapons. I keep my chi flowing by picking fights with drunk miners.

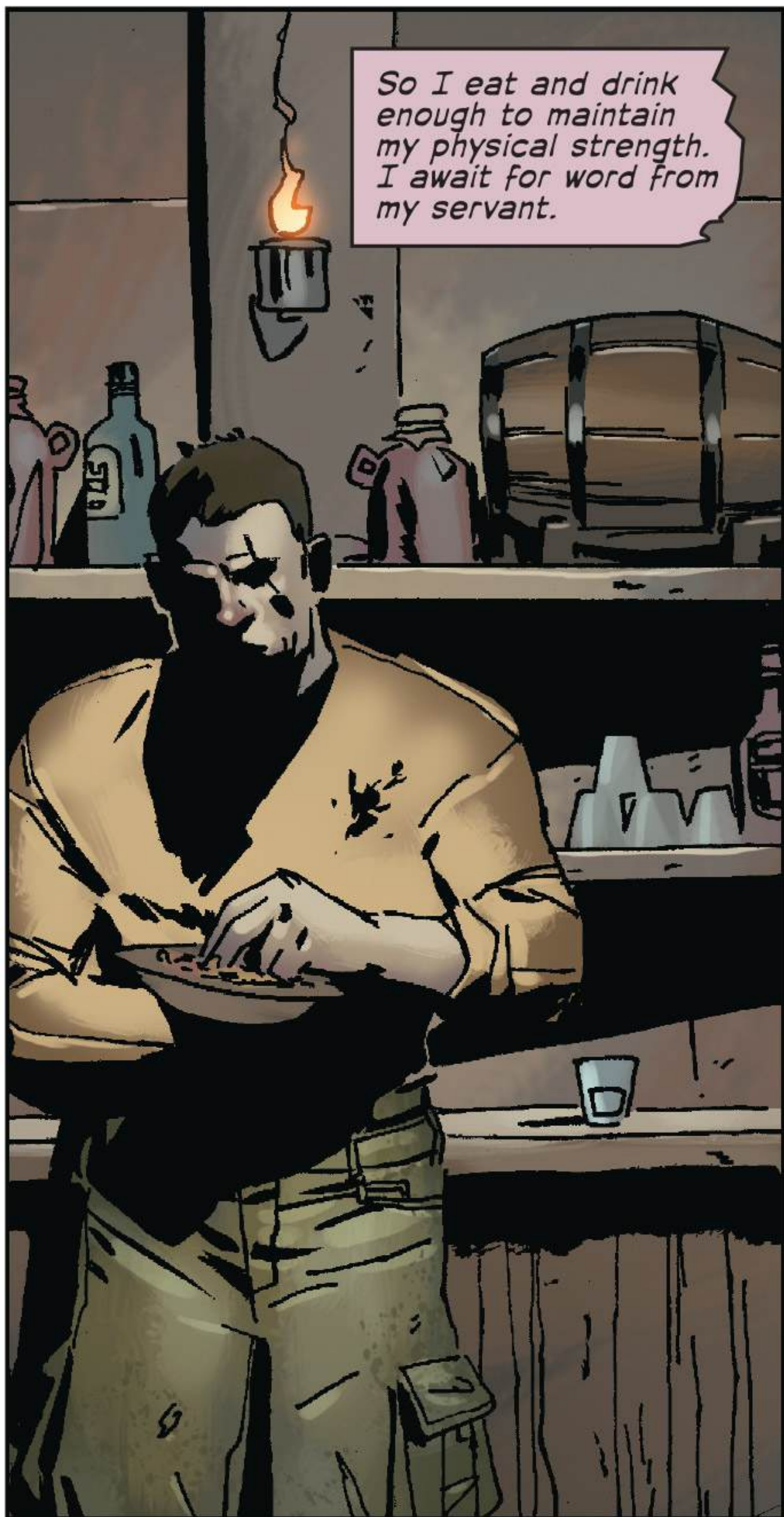
I grew tired of camping at the gates, so I left a servant there with instruction to report back in case they appeared.

This bar was the closest habitable structure to the gates.



It would not have been my first choice.

But again, I've been learning to appreciate the folly of "choice."



So I eat and drink enough to maintain my physical strength. I await for word from my servant.



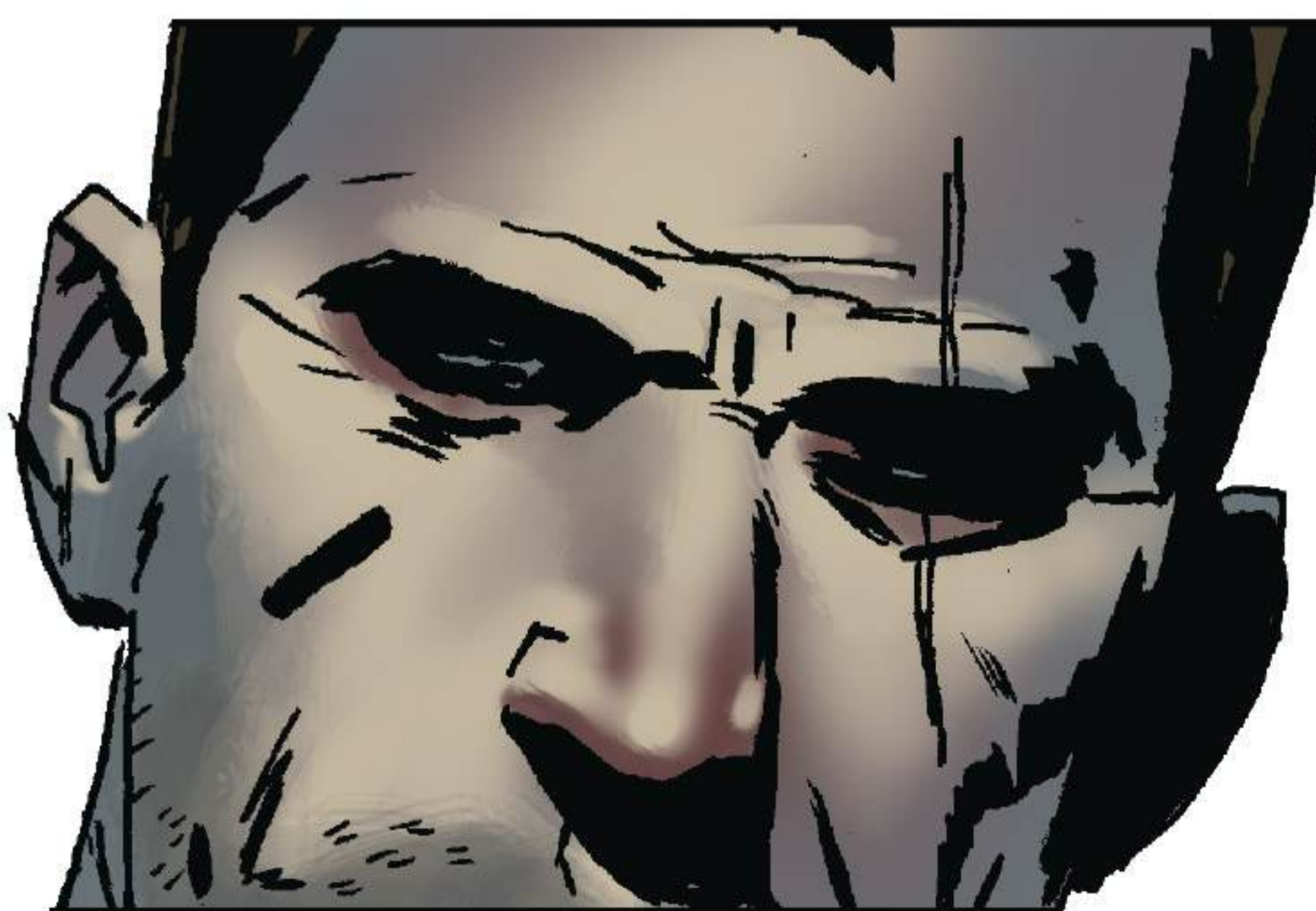
And I think about the task my father gave me. The lie I told Danny...



≥Huff≤... MASTER DAVOS, ≥Huff≤... I...THE GATE...

Shhh.

COME HERE,
WHERE IT IS
WARM.



My servant
reported a
stirring from
the entrance
point--a fierce
glow, burning
like a piece of
the sun itself.

No signs of
life, he said, but
something was
clearly happening.

If what he
says is true...

I may have to face
Danny in battle again.

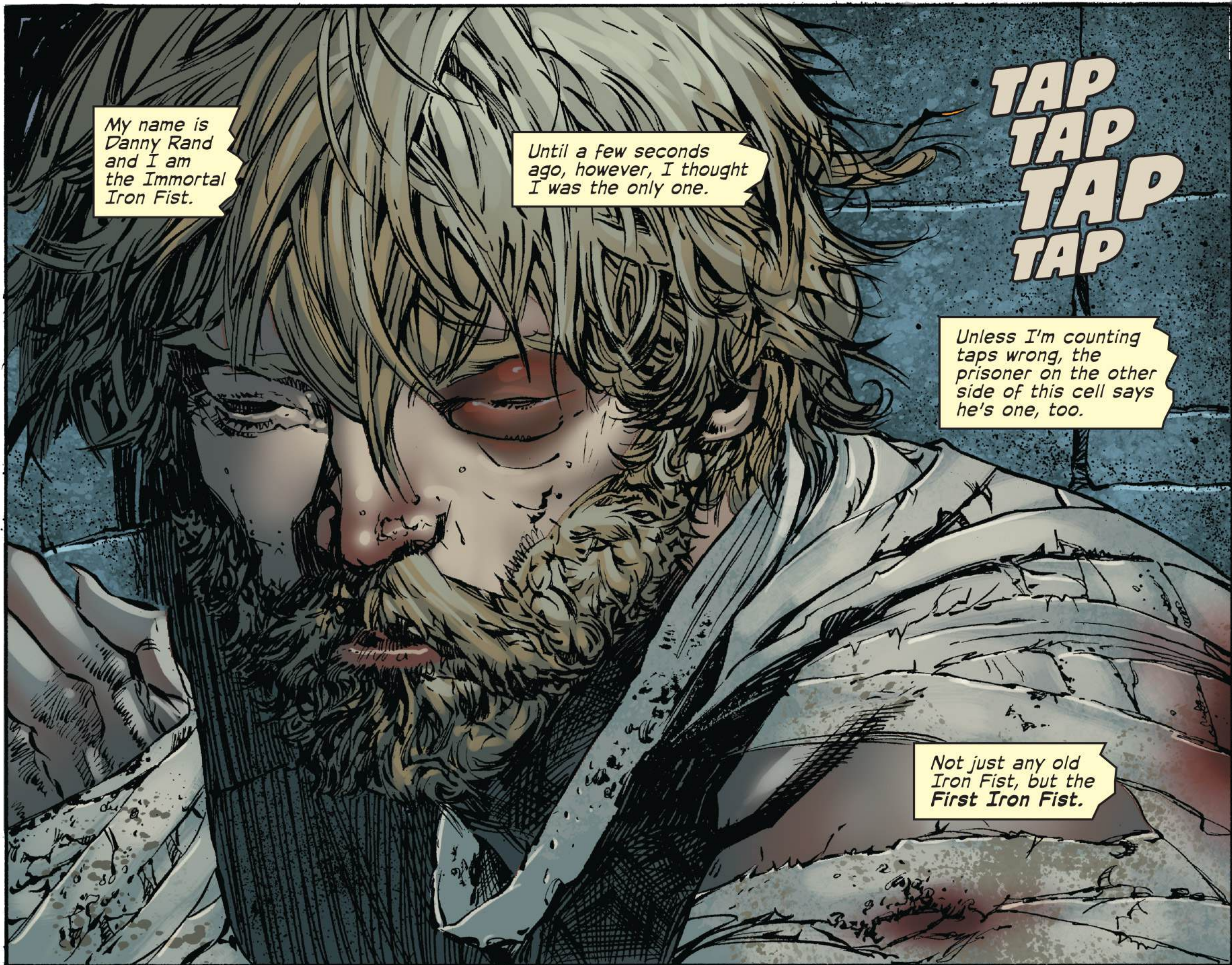
I may have
to kill again.

THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST

ESCAPE FROM THE EIGHTH CITY

CHAPTER TWO





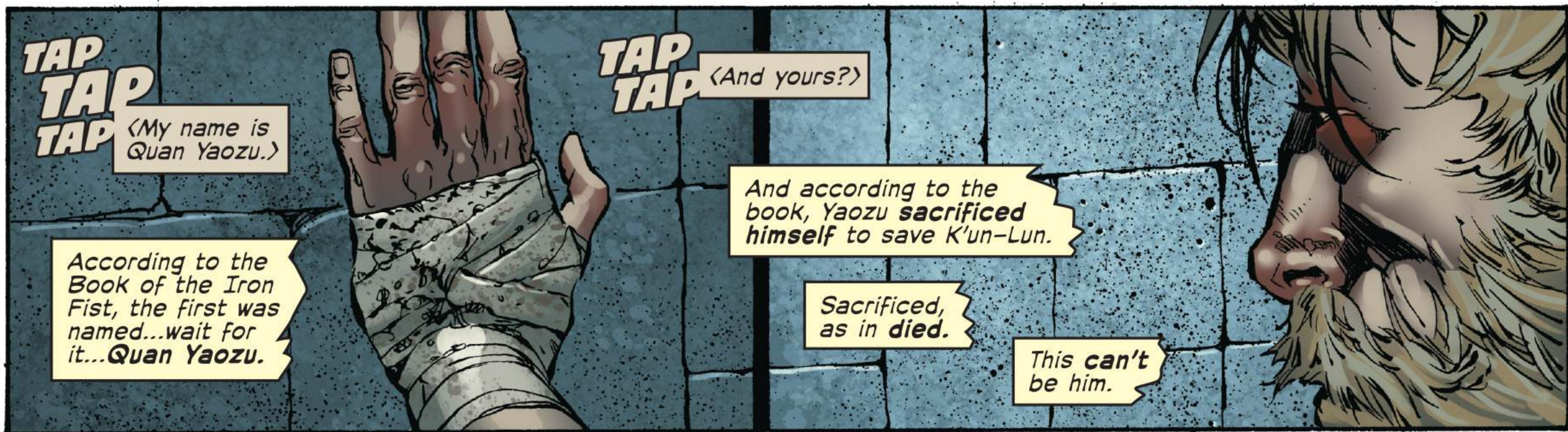
My name is Danny Rand and I am the Immortal Iron Fist.

Until a few seconds ago, however, I thought I was the only one.

TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP

Unless I'm counting taps wrong, the prisoner on the other side of this cell says he's one, too.

Not just any old Iron Fist, but the First Iron Fist.



TAP
TAP
TAP

My name is Quan Yaozu.

According to the Book of the Iron Fist, the first was named...wait for it...Quan Yaozu.

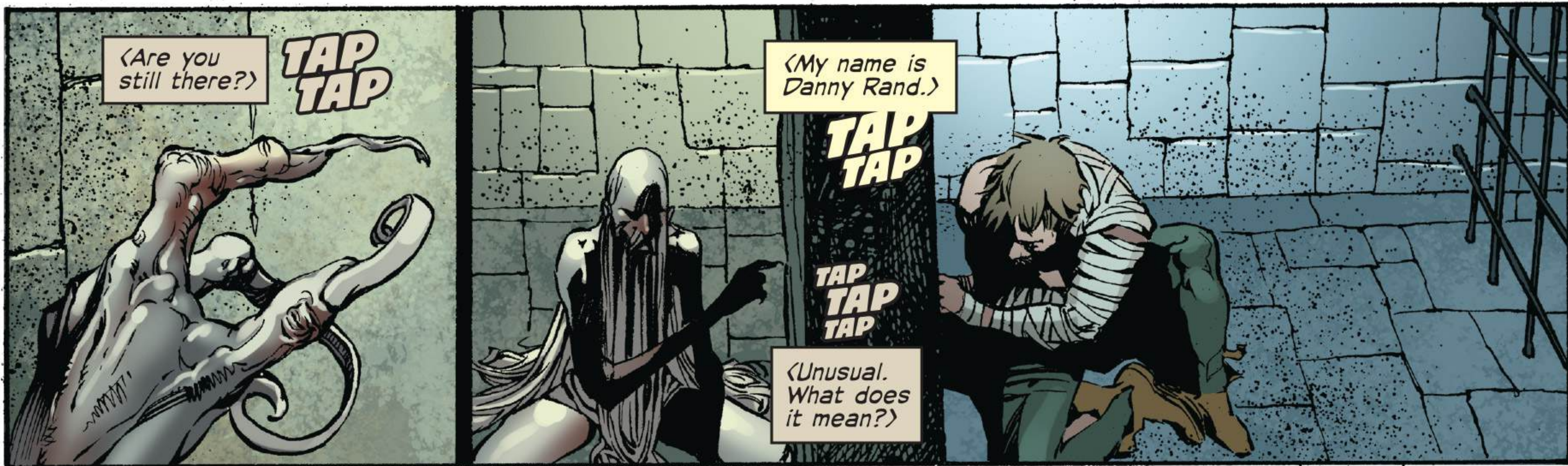
TAP
TAP

And yours?

And according to the book, Yaozu **sacrificed** himself to save K'un-Lun.

Sacrificed, as in died.

This can't be him.



Are you still there?

TAP
TAP

My name is Danny Rand.

TAP
TAP

TAP
TAP
TAP

Unusual. What does it mean?



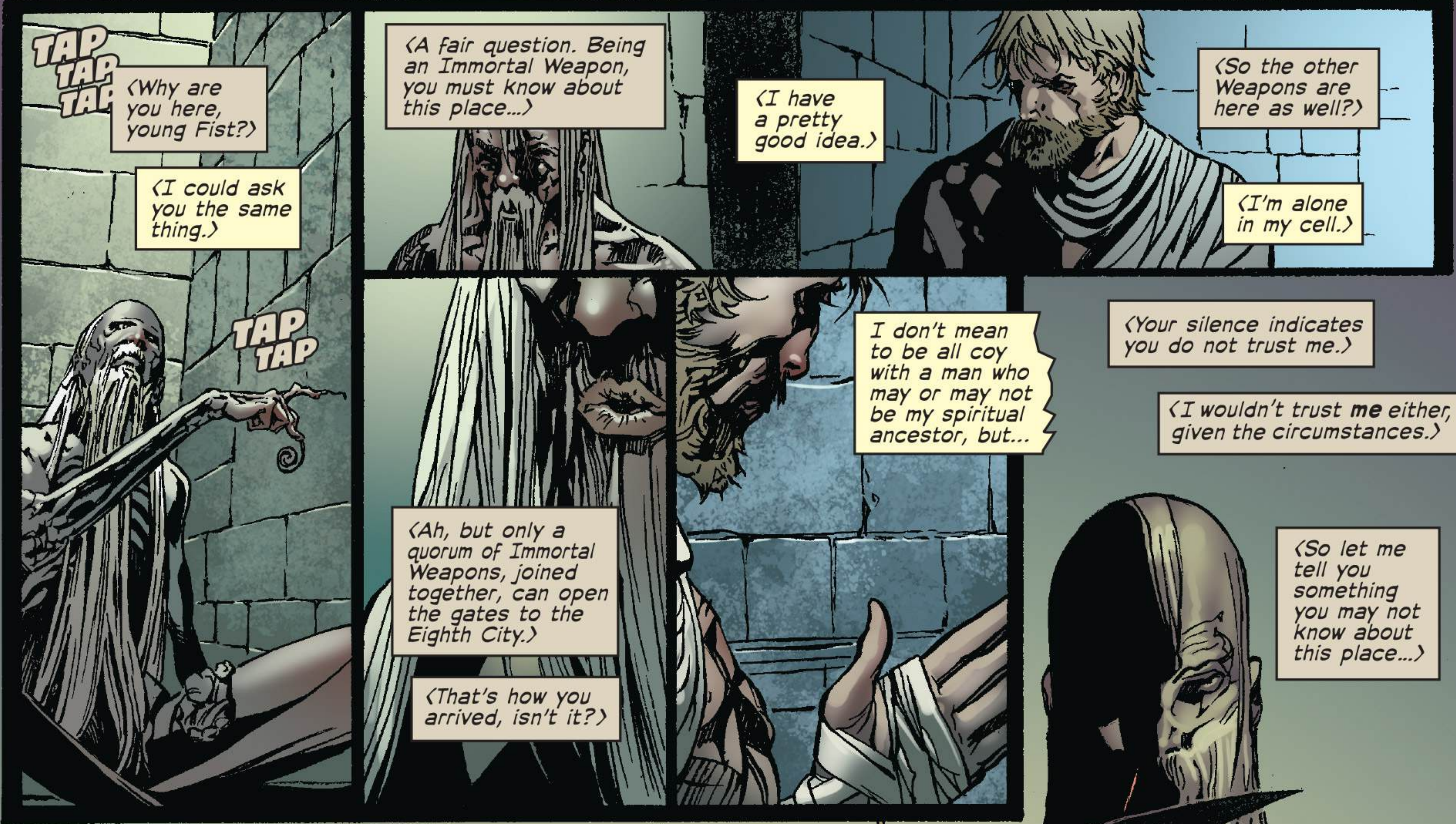
I think of that Quentin Tarantino line...

"I'm American, honey. Our names don't mean *um*"

Instead I say:

TAP
TAP

I'm named for my father.



TAP
TAP
TAP

<Why are
you here,
young Fist?>

<I could ask
you the same
thing.>

<A fair question. Being
an Immortal Weapon,
you must know about
this place...>

<I have
a pretty
good idea.>

<So the other
Weapons are
here as well?>

<I'm alone
in my cell.>

TAP
TAP

I don't mean
to be all coy
with a man who
may or may not
be my spiritual
ancestor, but...

<Your silence indicates
you do not trust me.>

<I wouldn't trust **me** either,
given the circumstances.>

<Ah, but only a
quorum of Immortal
Weapons, joined
together, can open
the gates to the
Eighth City.>

<That's how you
arrived, isn't it?>

<So let me
tell you
something
you may not
know about
this place...>

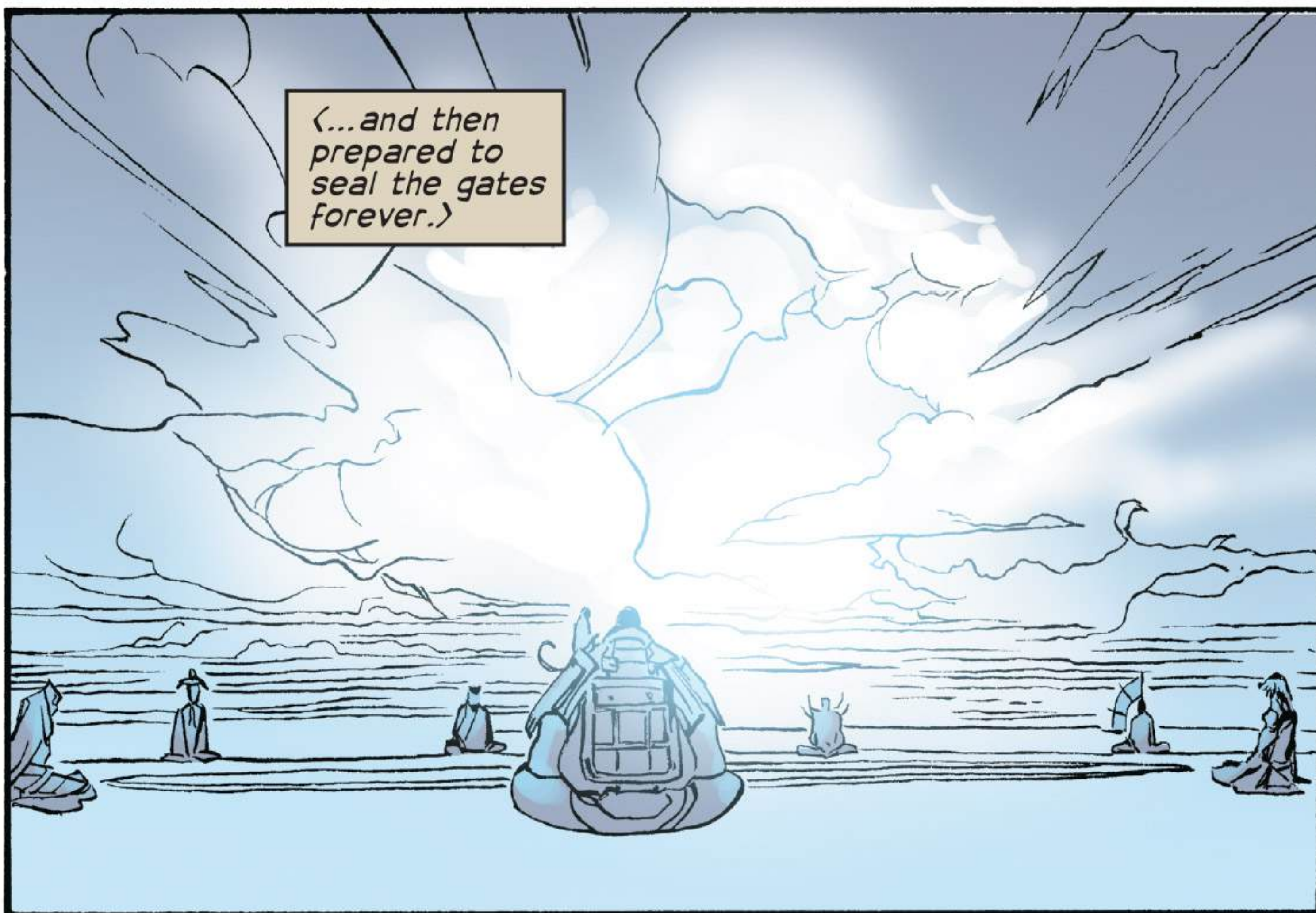


<...And then
perhaps you
will feel
more free
to converse.>

<All seven of
us were there at
the beginning...>



〈We ushered
the last of
the damned
into the city...〉

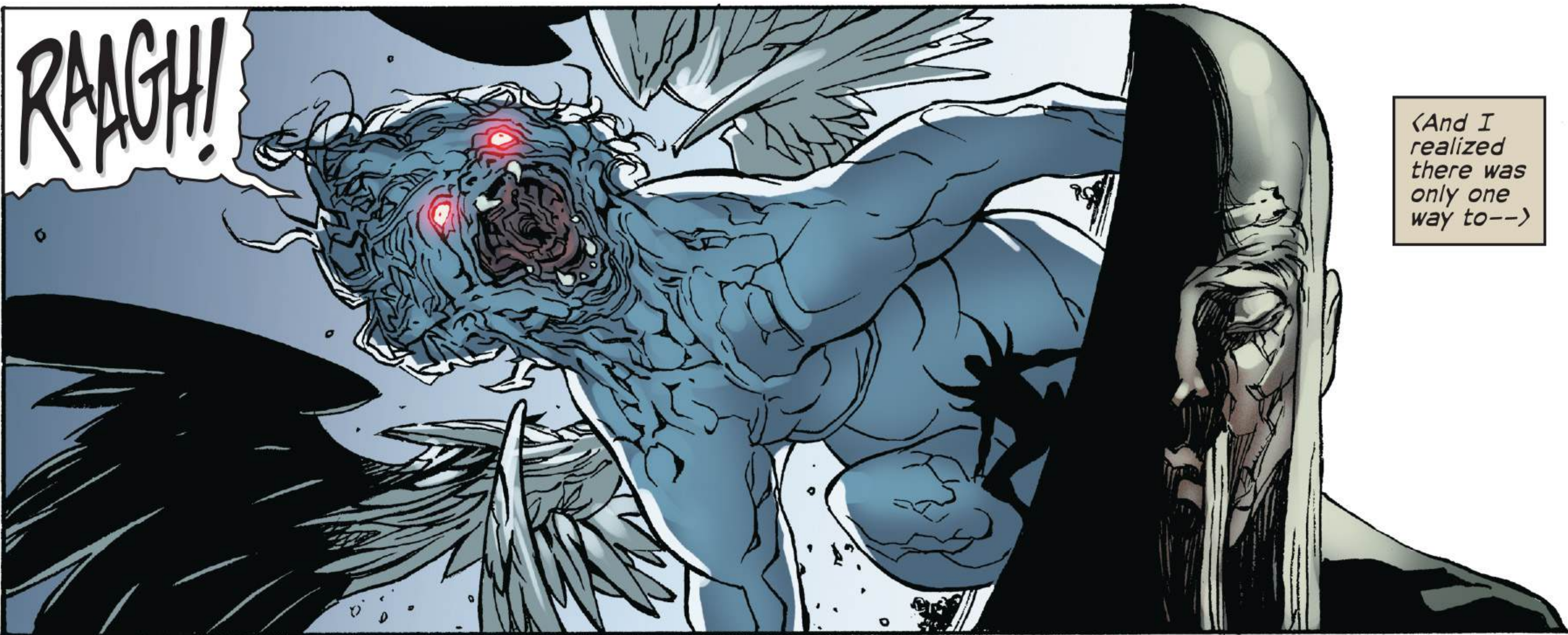


〈...and then
prepared to
seal the gates
forever.〉



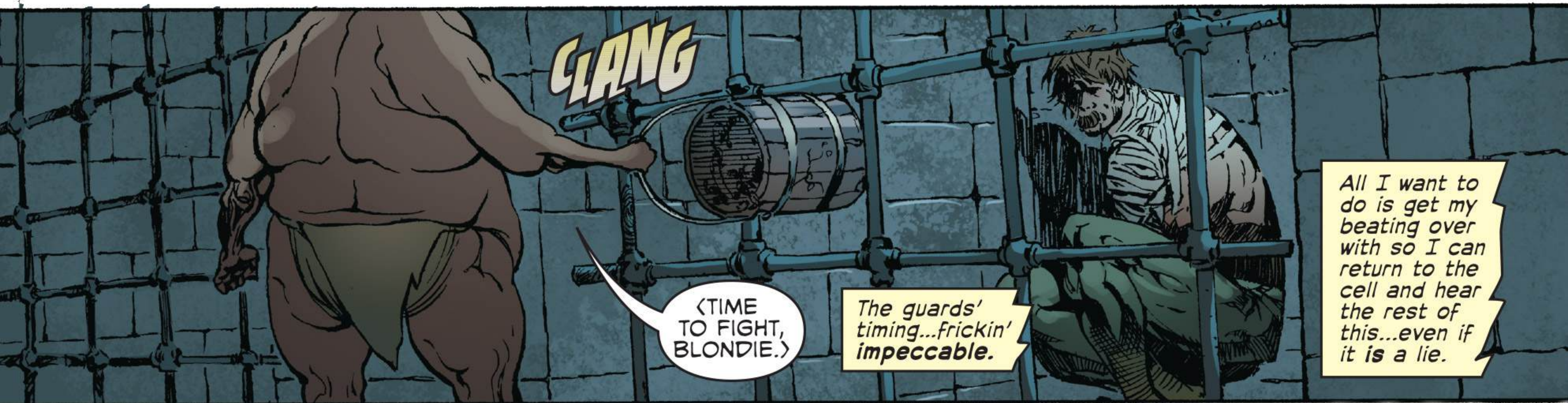
〈But after hours
of meditation, the
gates refused to
stay closed.〉

〈Something
was pushing
back.〉



RAAGH!

〈And I
realized
there was
only one
way to--〉

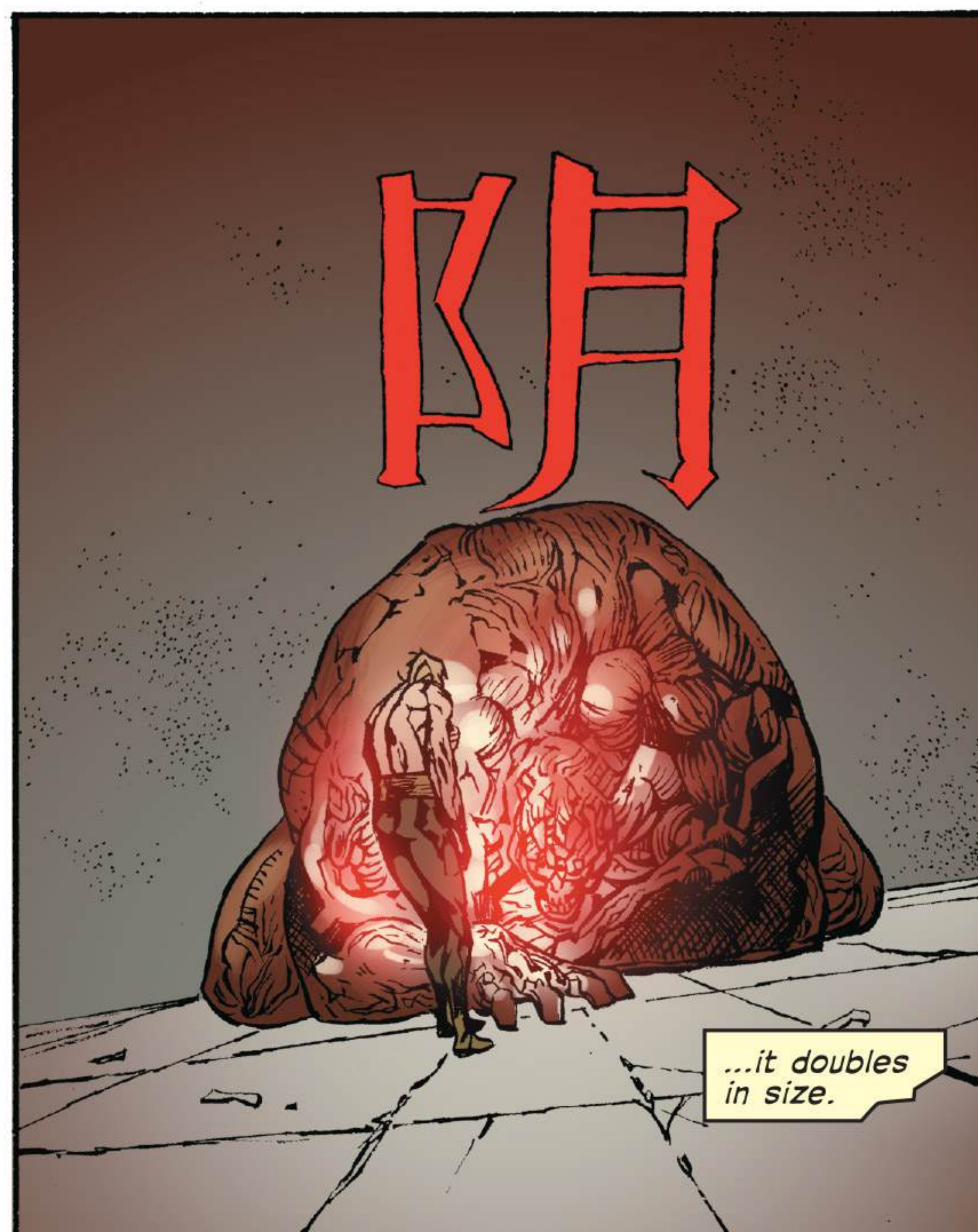
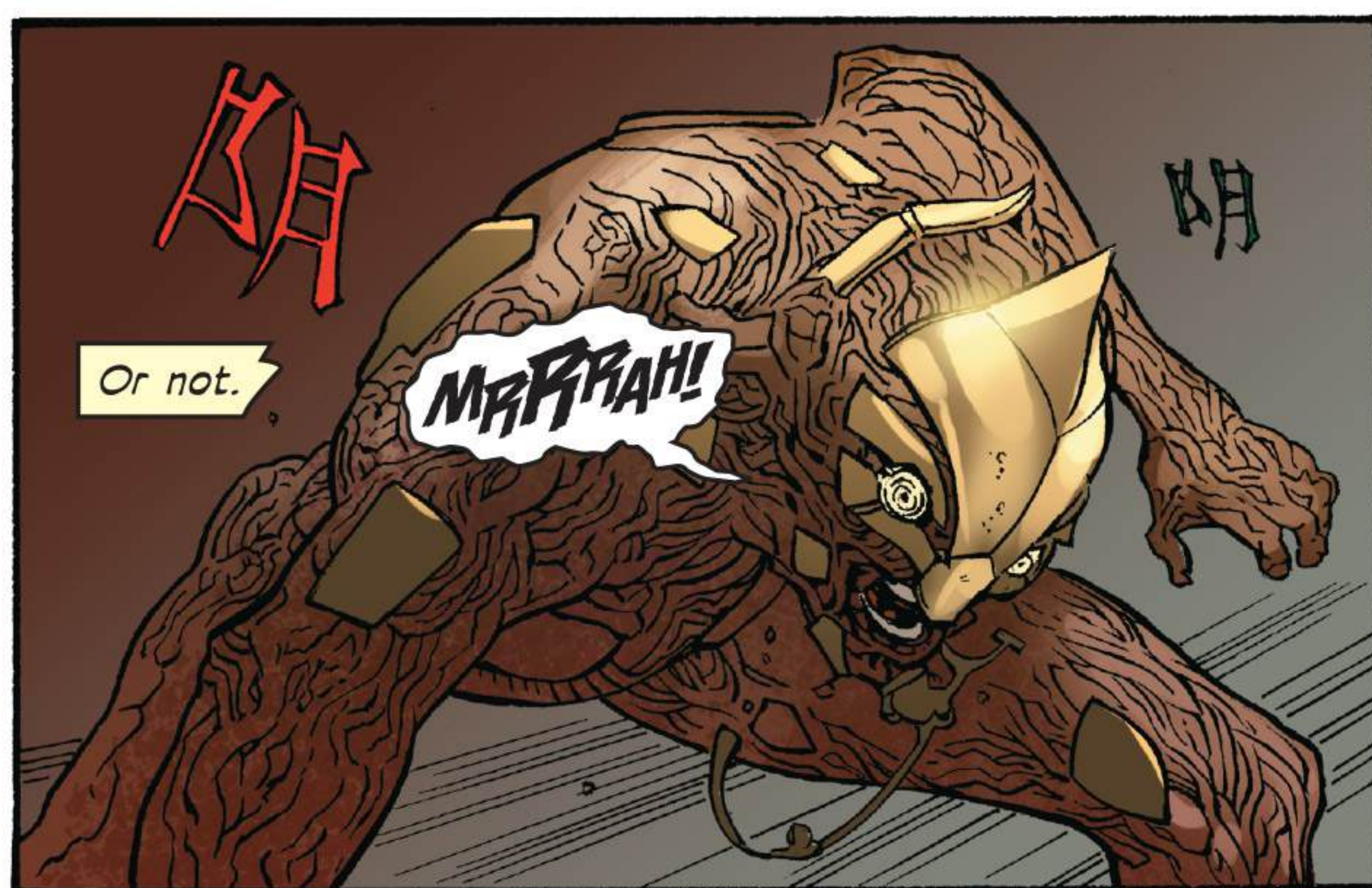
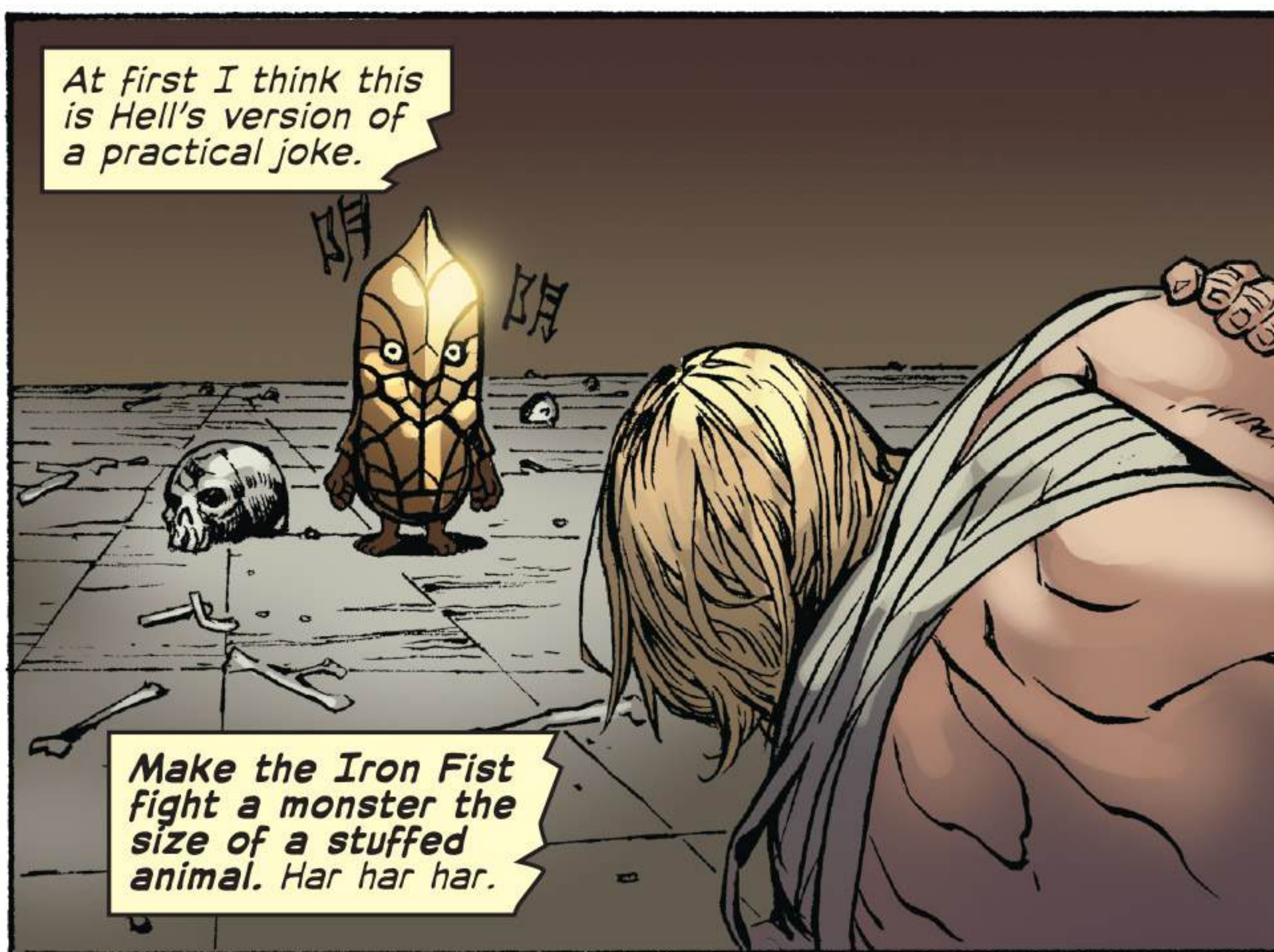


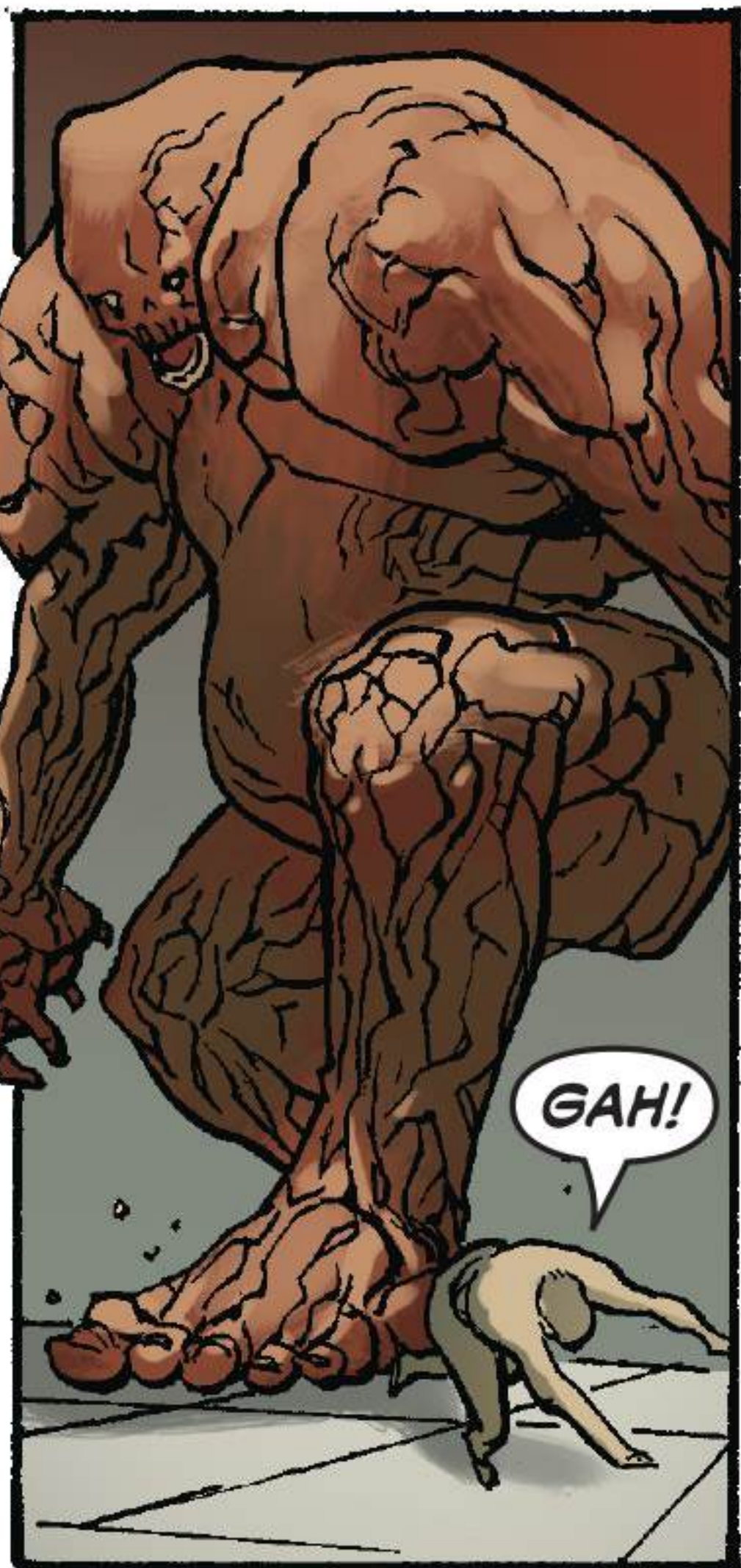
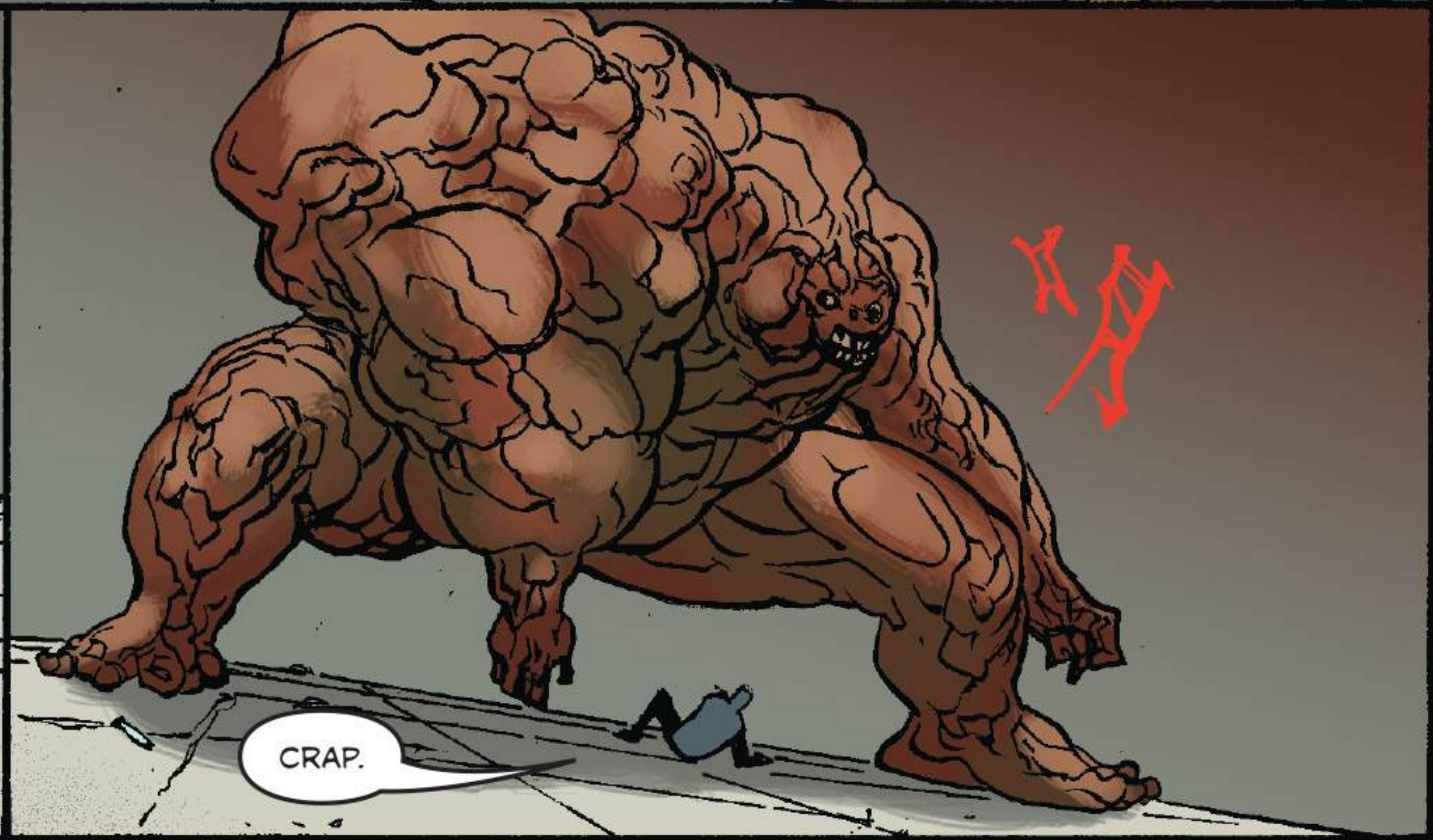
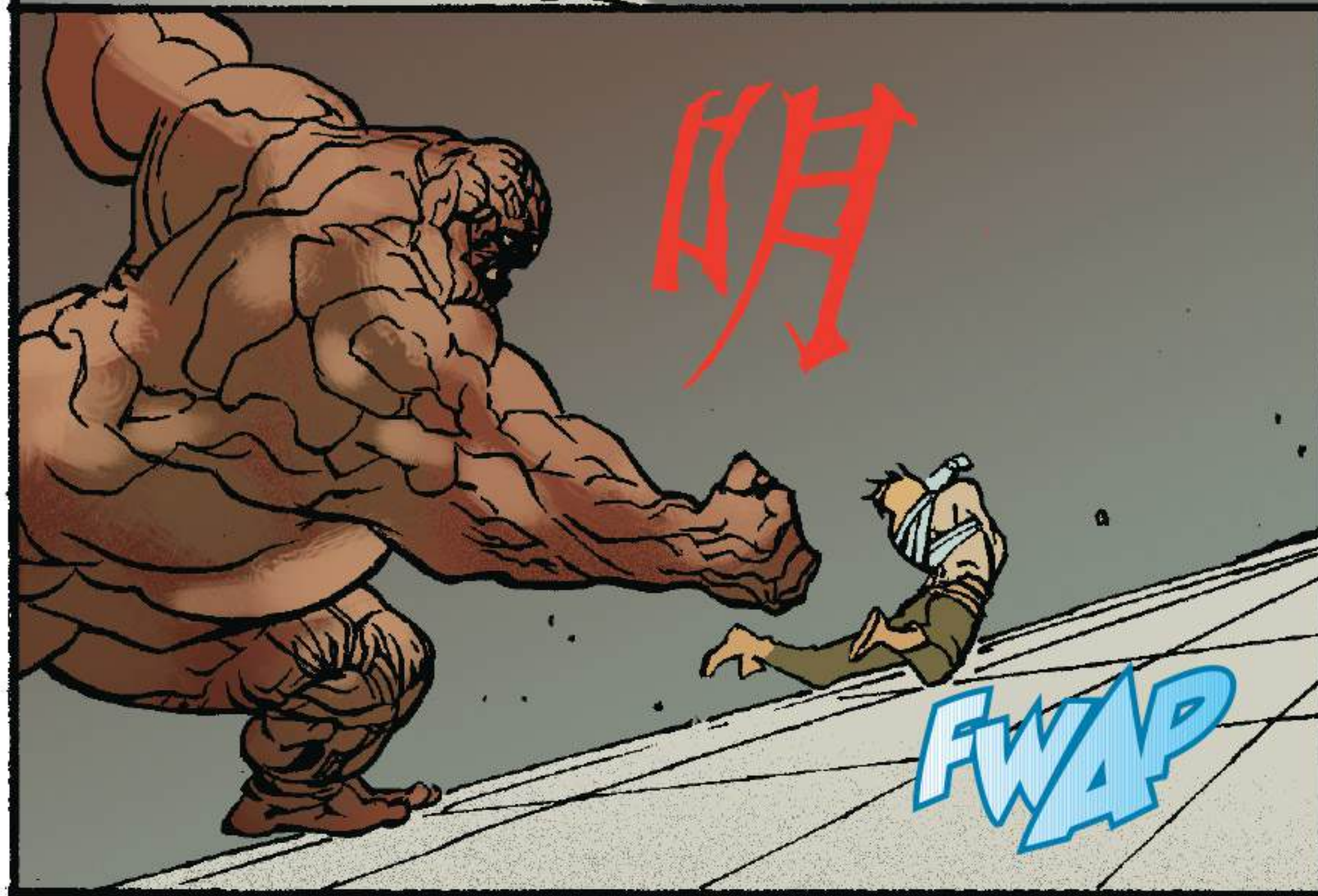
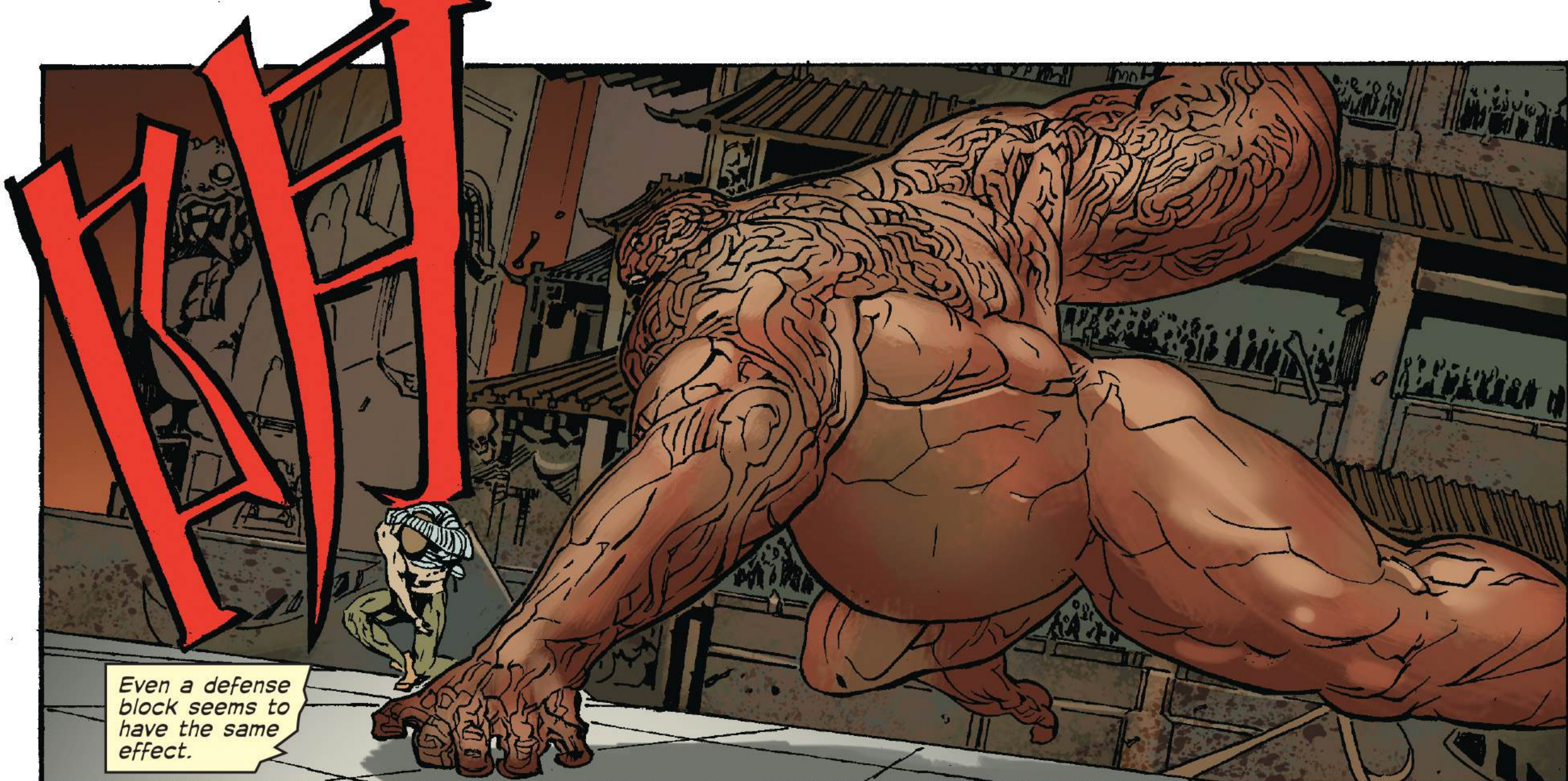
CLANG

〈TIME
TO FIGHT,
BLONDIE.〉

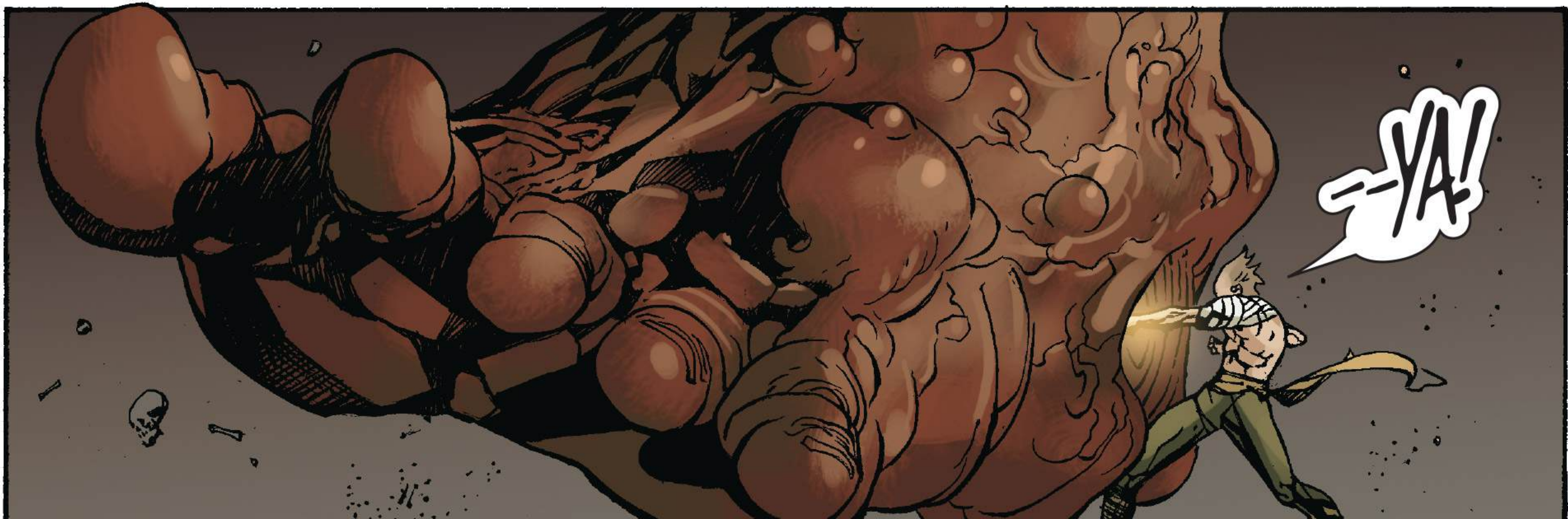
The guards'
timing...frickin'
impeccable.

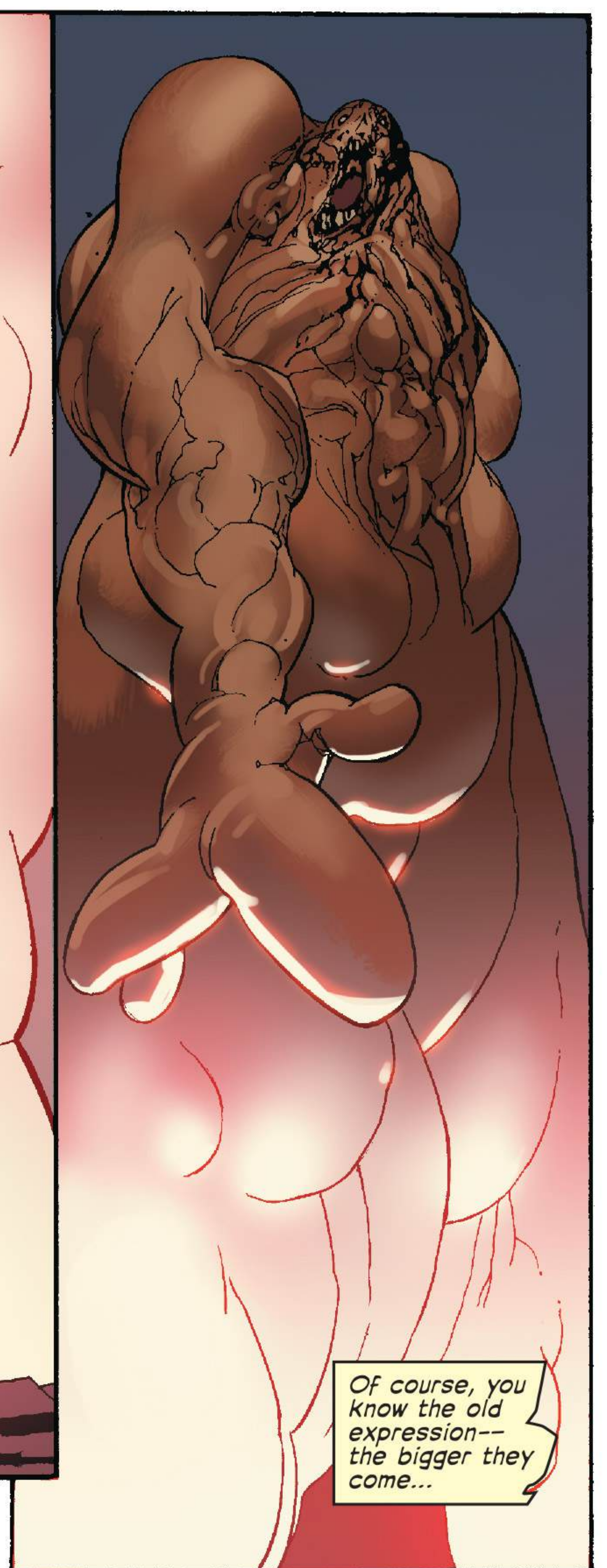
All I want to
do is get my
beating over
with so I can
return to the
cell and hear
the rest of
this...even if
it is a lie.





Well, if that's how it wants to play...





...the harder they fall when you slice through their Achilles tendon.

CHUK

Thank God this thing has an Achilles tendon.

THROON

Ooooh, they're not too happy with me ruining part of their stadium.



WAH WAAHH.



But the chaos gives me a minute to try something.



Something that's been in the back of my mind, ever since my **tap-tap-tapping** conversation with Quan Yaozu.

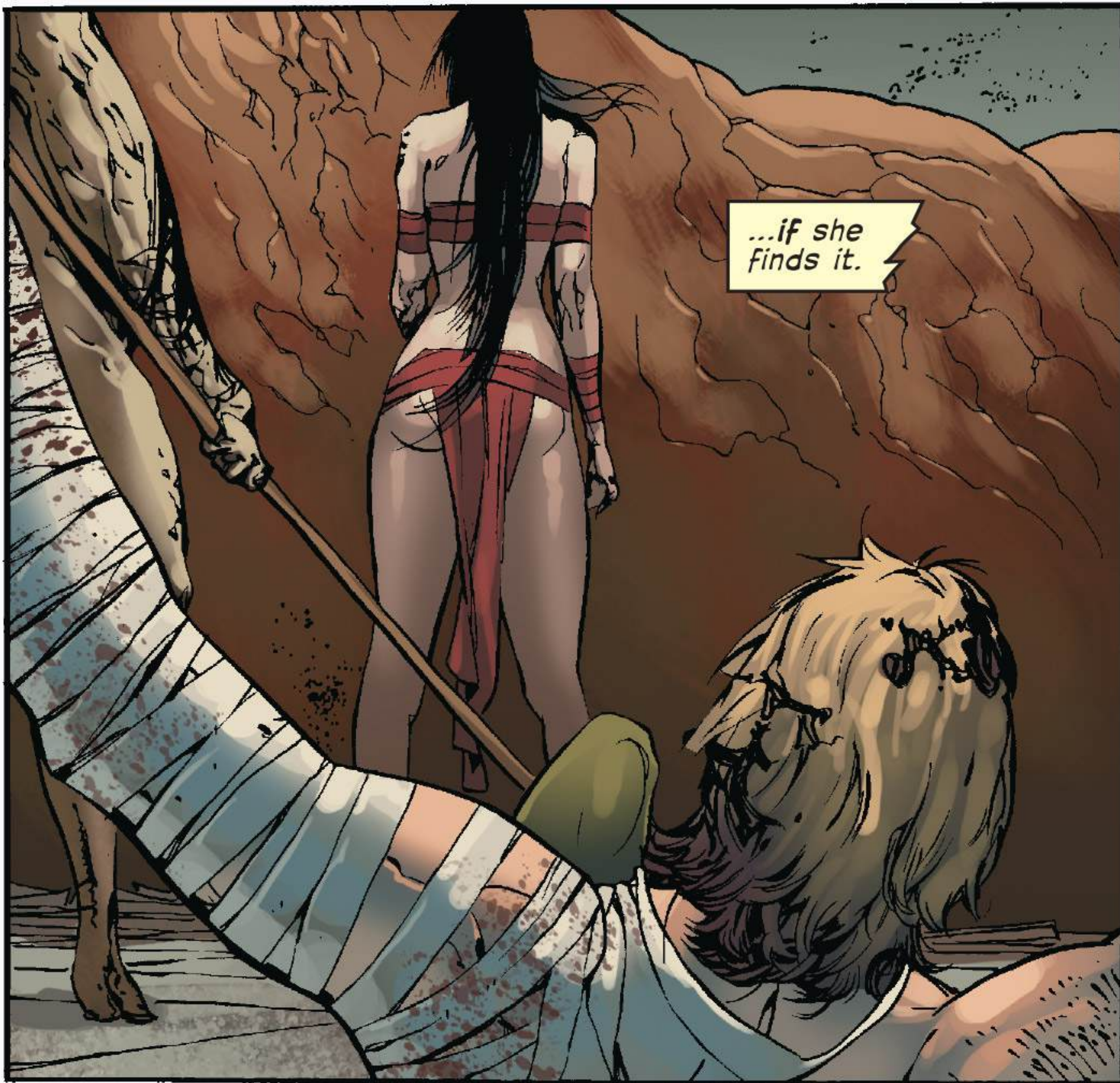


A coded message.



I just hope she'll be able to understand it...





...if she finds it.



QUIT STALLING!



Oh yeah. Tiger's Beautiful Daughter found it.



There is a long tradition of prisoners of war inventing new forms of communication, even in the harshest of settings.



We didn't share a cell. Or even a wall.

We used the only common ground we had: the arena.

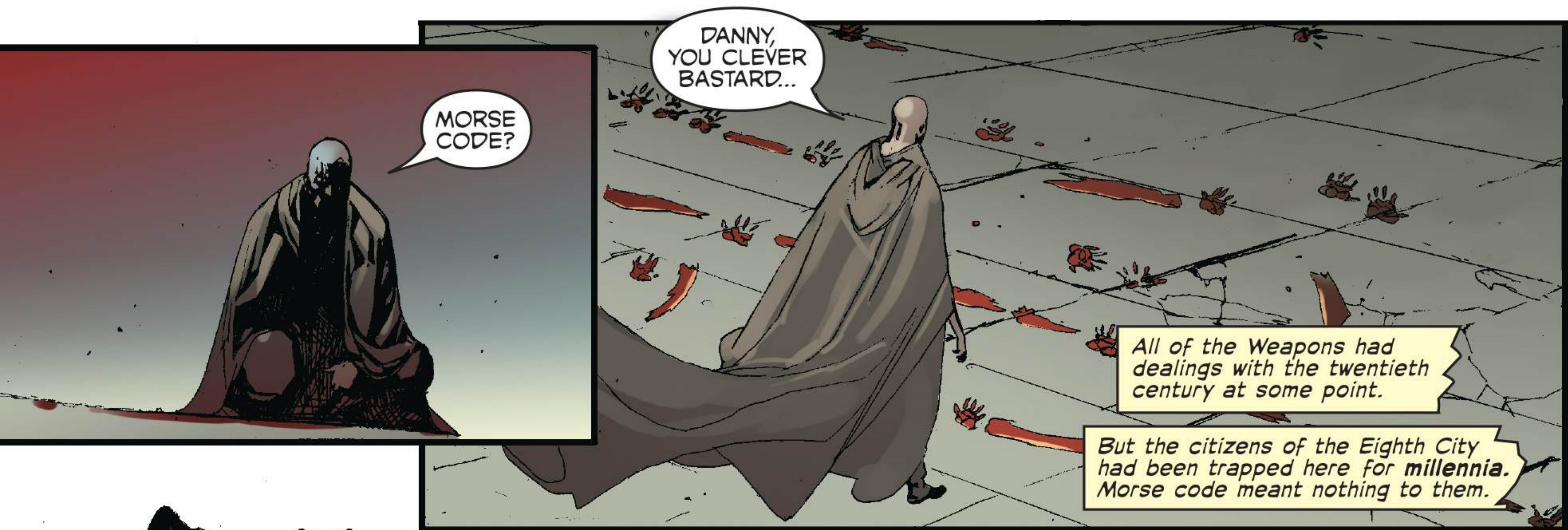


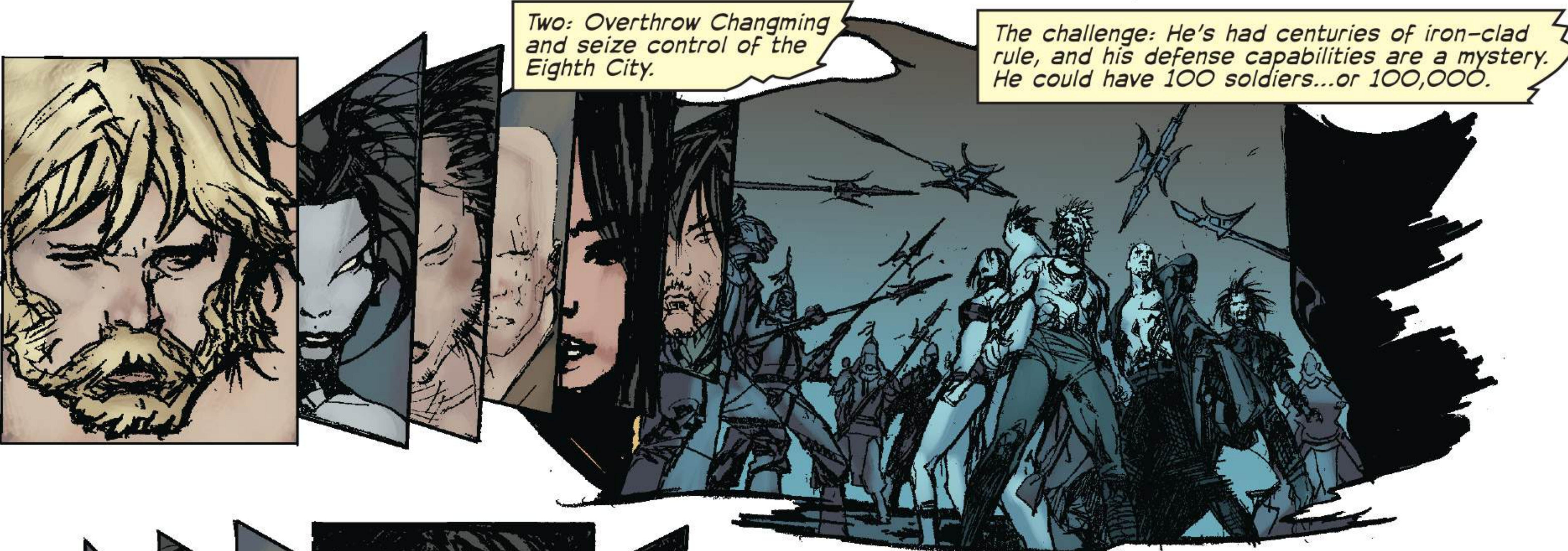
The only thing left was to figure out a common language.

Something only the Weapons would understand--not our captors.



So I tried something that I'm pretty sure would be unfamiliar to anyone locked up for a few centuries.





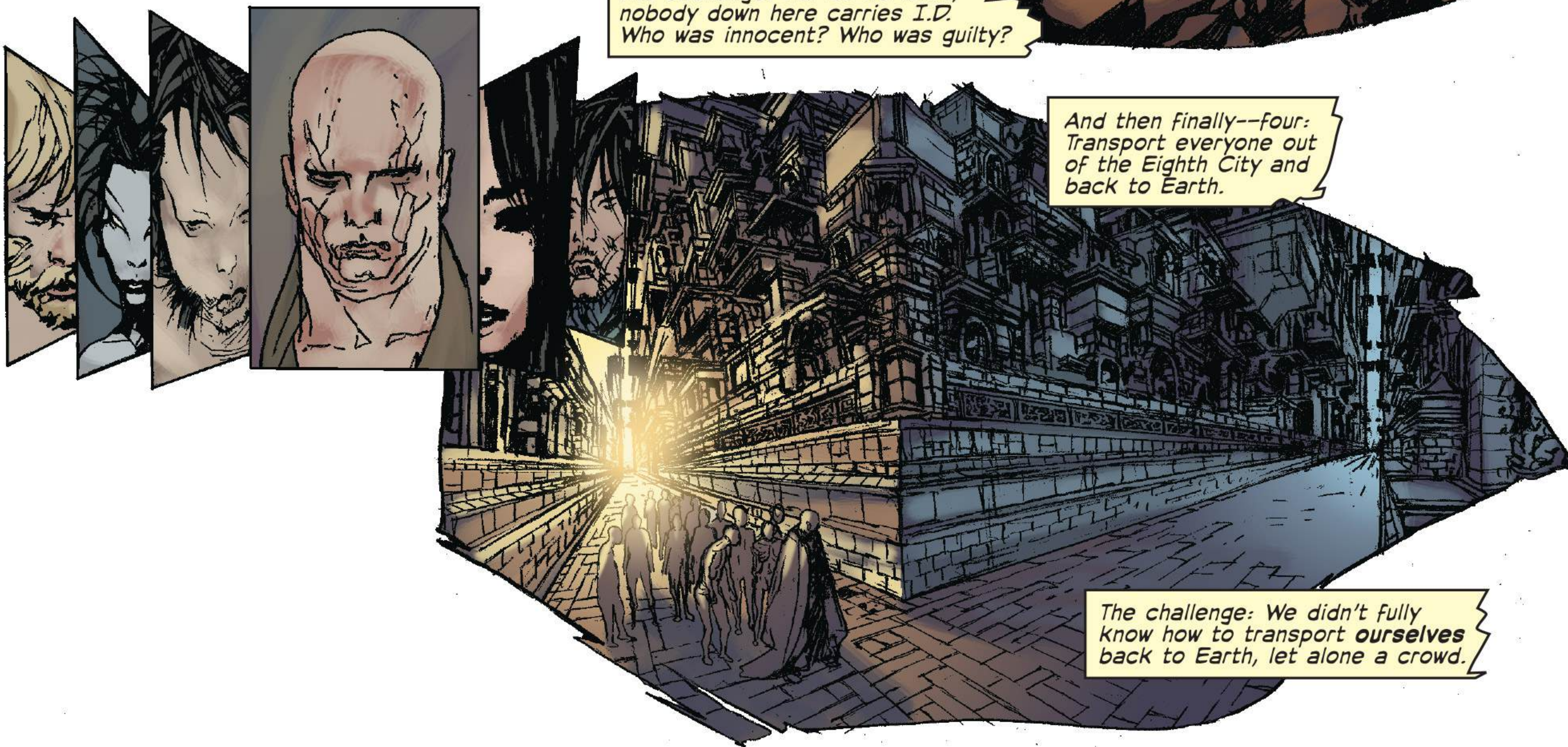
Two: Overthrow Changming and seize control of the Eighth City.

The challenge: He's had centuries of iron-clad rule, and his defense capabilities are a mystery. He could have 100 soldiers...or 100,000.



Three: Identify, then gather the innocents.

The challenge: Far as we know, nobody down here carries I.D. Who was innocent? Who was guilty?



And then finally--four: Transport everyone out of the Eighth City and back to Earth.

The challenge: We didn't fully know how to transport **ourselves** back to Earth, let alone a crowd.



But we'd figure out the challenges. The important thing was, we were working as a team again.



Maybe that's why I got summoned to the principal's office.



THESE MARKINGS ON THE GROUND...YOU AND THE OTHERS ARE PLOTTING ESCAPE.

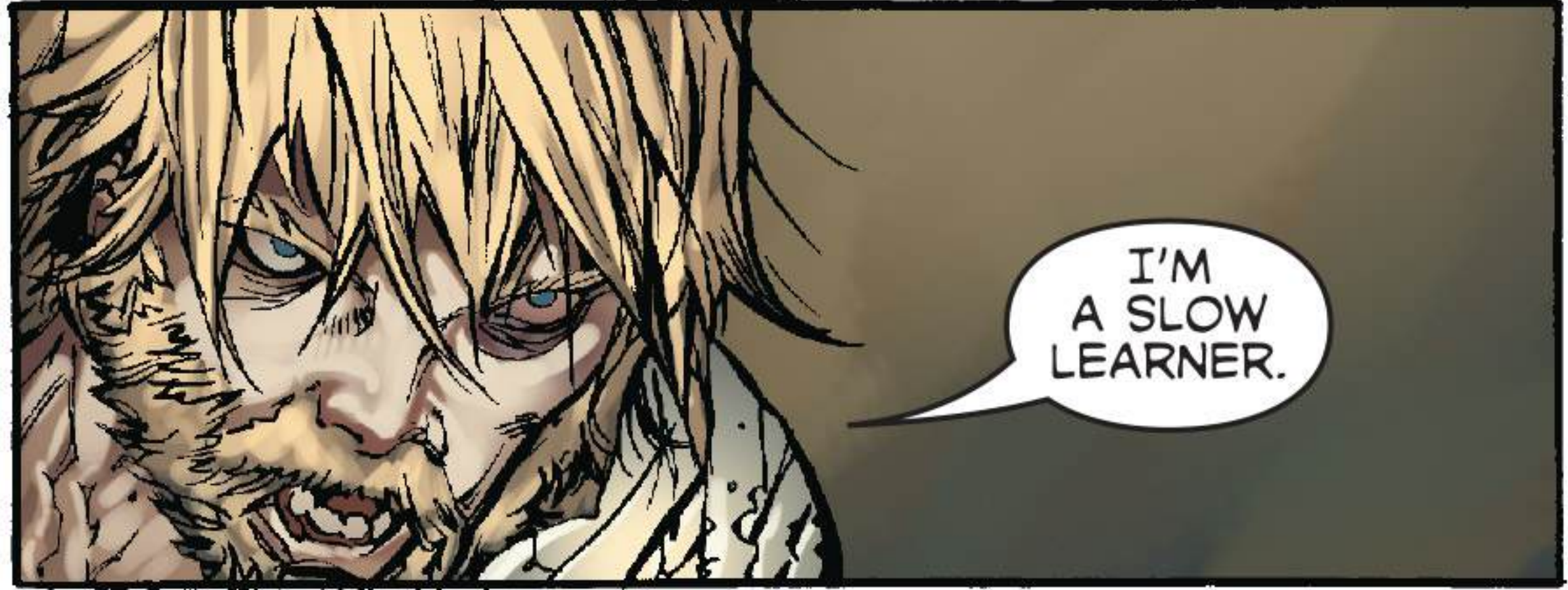
OF COURSE. ISN'T THAT THE PRIMARY ACTIVITY OF ALL PEOPLE HELD AGAINST THEIR WILL?



ONLY WHEN THERE IS HOPE OF ESCAPE.

BUT WHERE YOU ARE, *FIST*, THERE IS NO HOPE. NO *ESCAPE*.

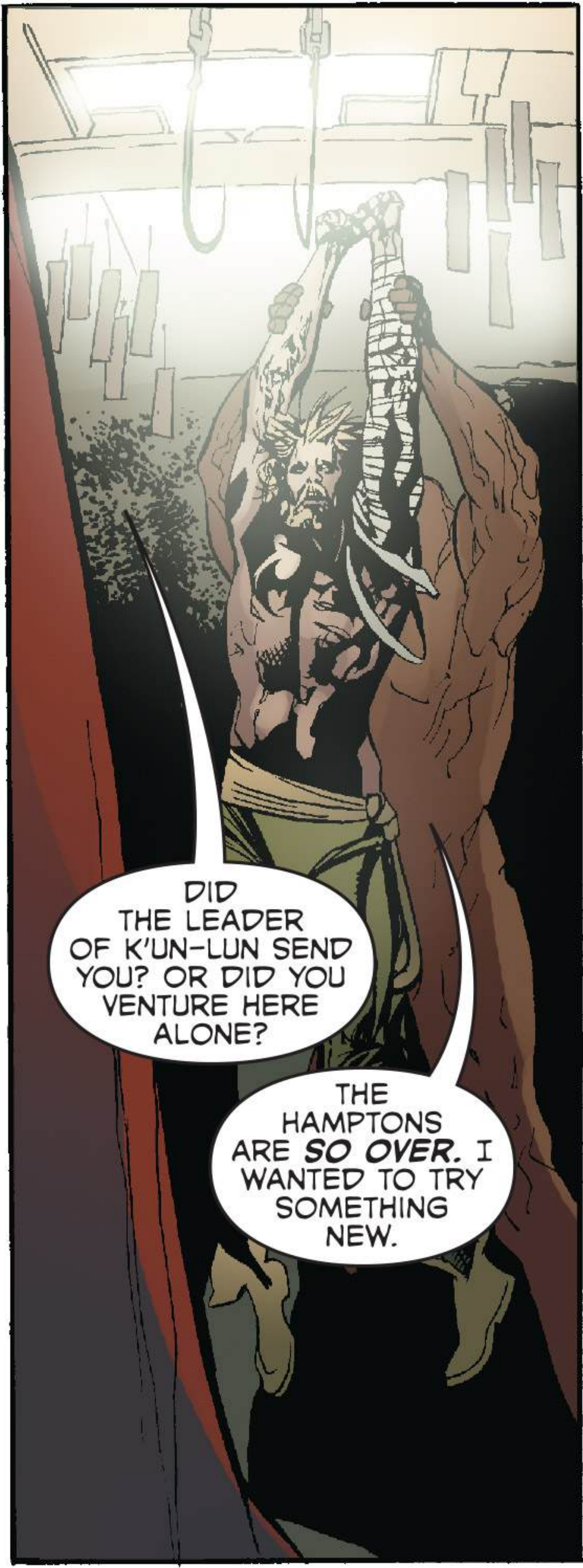
DON'T YOU KNOW THAT?



I'M A SLOW LEARNER.



Hmm.



DID THE LEADER OF K'UN-LUN SEND YOU? OR DID YOU VENTURE HERE ALONE?

THE HAMPTONS ARE *SO OVER*. I WANTED TO TRY SOMETHING NEW.

AAAGH!
AAAGH!

Ngh...

WHO TOLD
YOU ABOUT THE
EIGHTH CITY?

LOOK,
IF THIS IS A
TORTURE THING,
FORGET IT. I'M
ALREADY IN HELL.
IT'D BE PRETTY
HARD TO MAKE
THINGS
WORSE.

THIS IS NOT
A "TORTURE
THING."

THAT
SYMBOL
OFFENDS
ME.

YOUR
BODY MUST
BE FLENCED
OF IT.

AAAAARGH!!

TAKE
HIM AWAY.

SEE THAT
THE PRISONER IN
THE NEXT CELL IS
GIVEN TRIPLE
FOOD RATIONS.



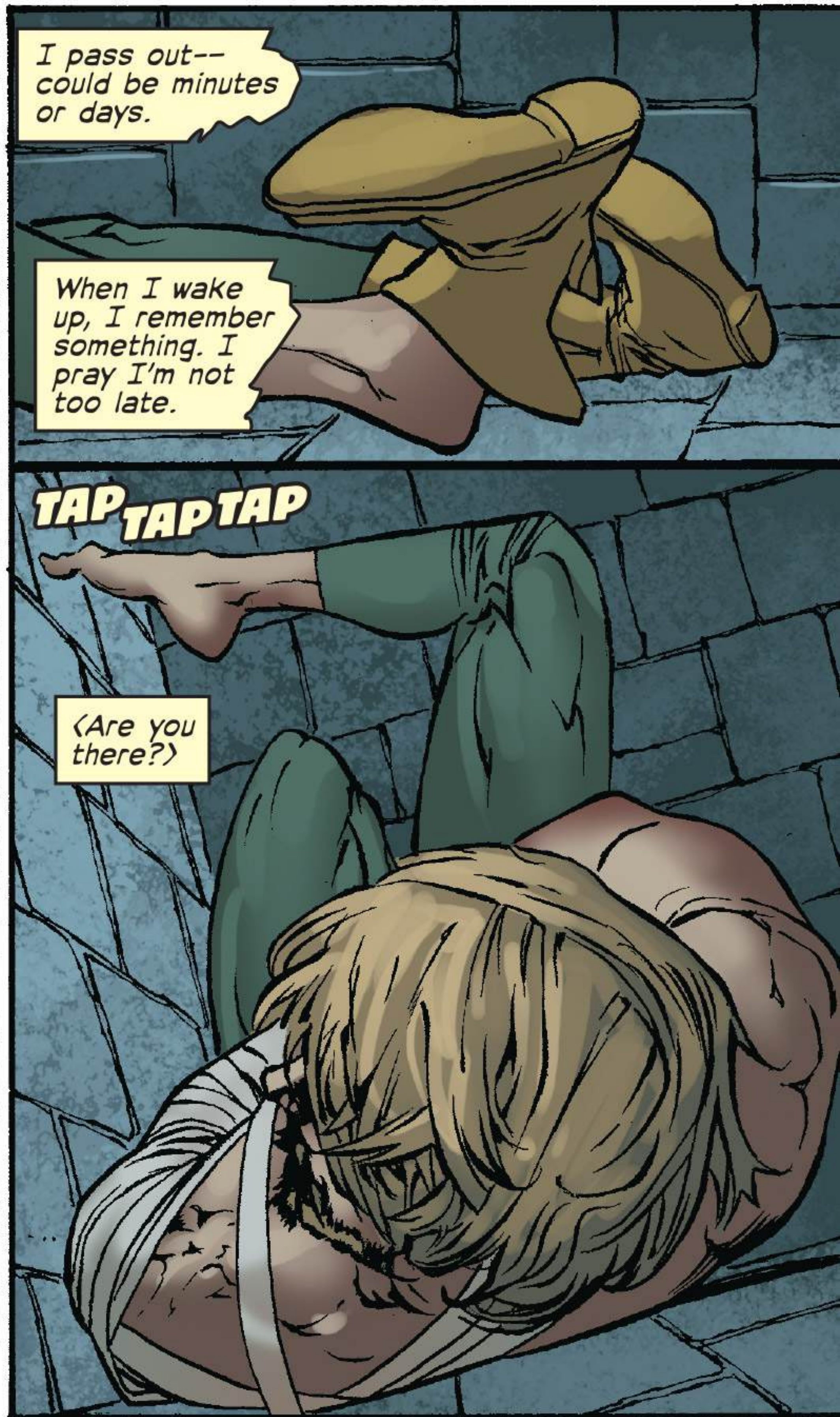
My chest feels like it's a BBQ pit.

It hasn't felt so agonizingly raw since I faced the dragon Shou-Lao.

On a bright note, though...



I won't have to wax my chest for a while.

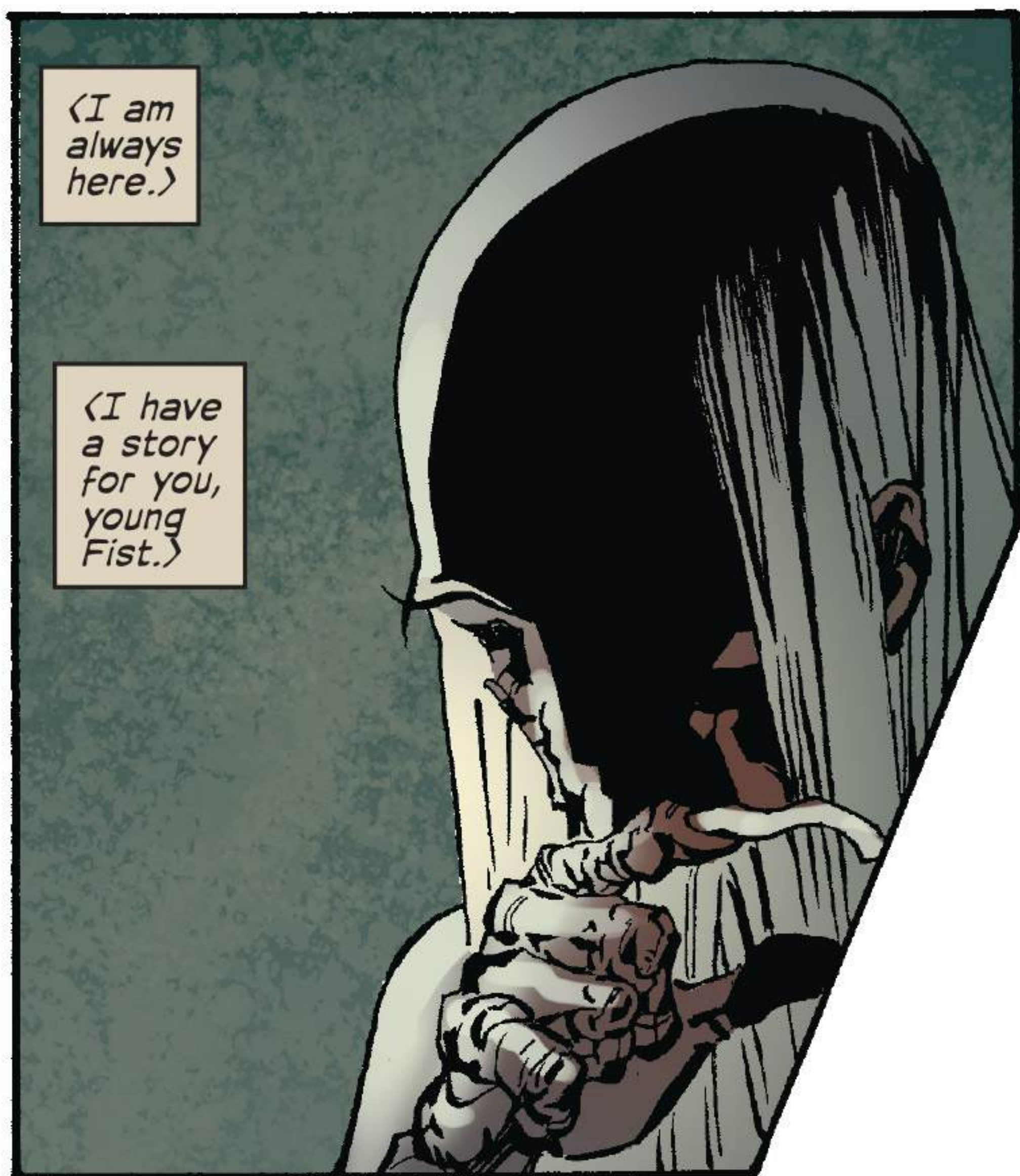


I pass out-- could be minutes or days.

When I wake up, I remember something. I pray I'm not too late.

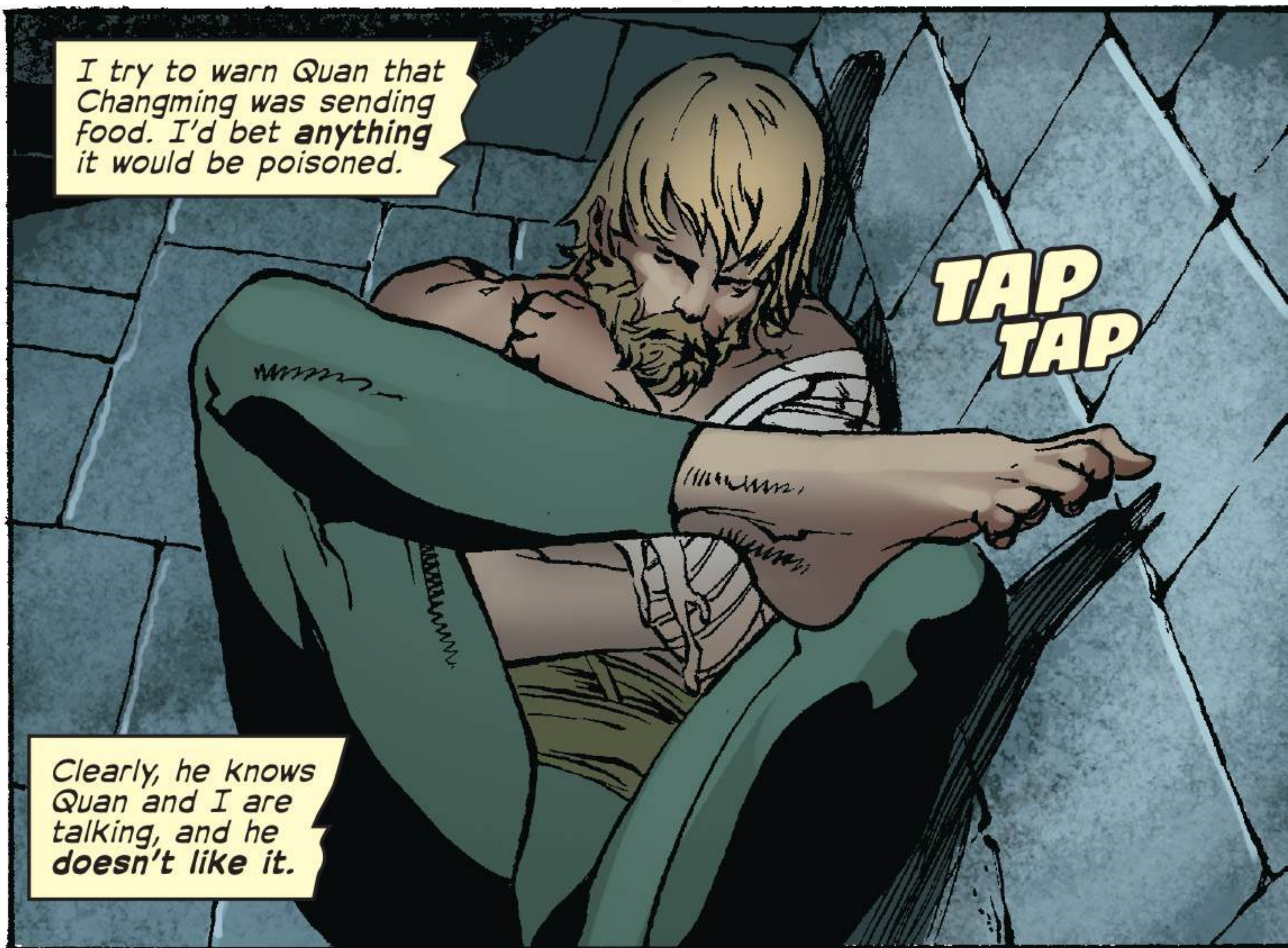
TAP TAP TAP

<Are you there?>



<I am always here.>

<I have a story for you, young Fist.>



I try to warn Quan that Changming was sending food. I'd bet **anything** it would be poisoned.

TAP TAP

Clearly, he knows Quan and I are talking, and he **doesn't** like it.



But Quan insists on telling his tale.

So I lie there, my chest on fire, listening to it.

TAP TAP TAP

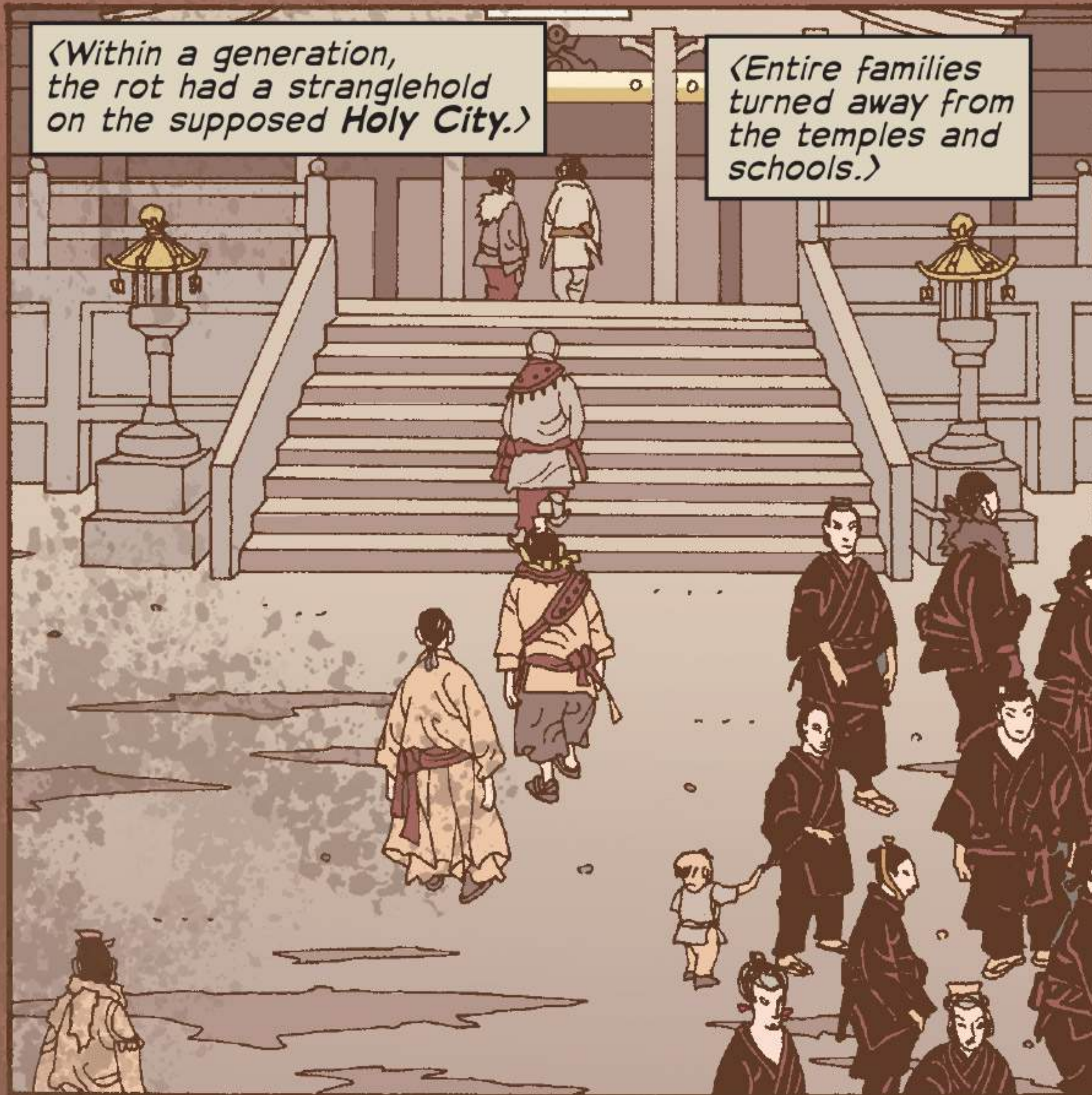
<No great city lasts forever. And K'un-Lun is no different.>

Excess leads to moral rot.
Some seek higher plateaus
of hedonism.



To achieve them, some
turn to the dark arts.

Within a generation,
the rot had a stranglehold
on the supposed Holy City.

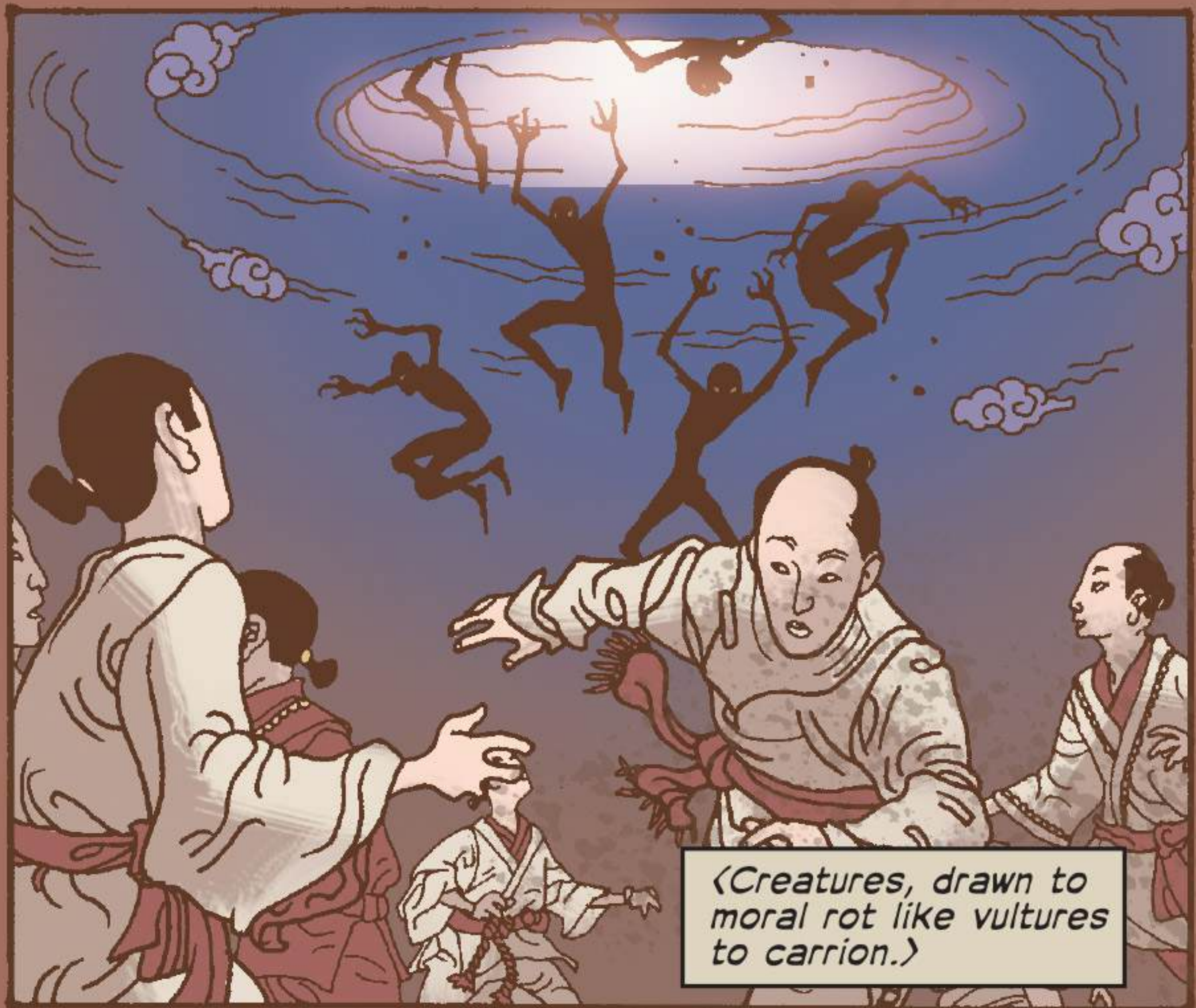


Entire families
turned away from
the temples and
schools.

A trickster named **Changming**
rose up to lead those who
embraced the darkness.



He was able to
summon assistance
from another plane
of existence.

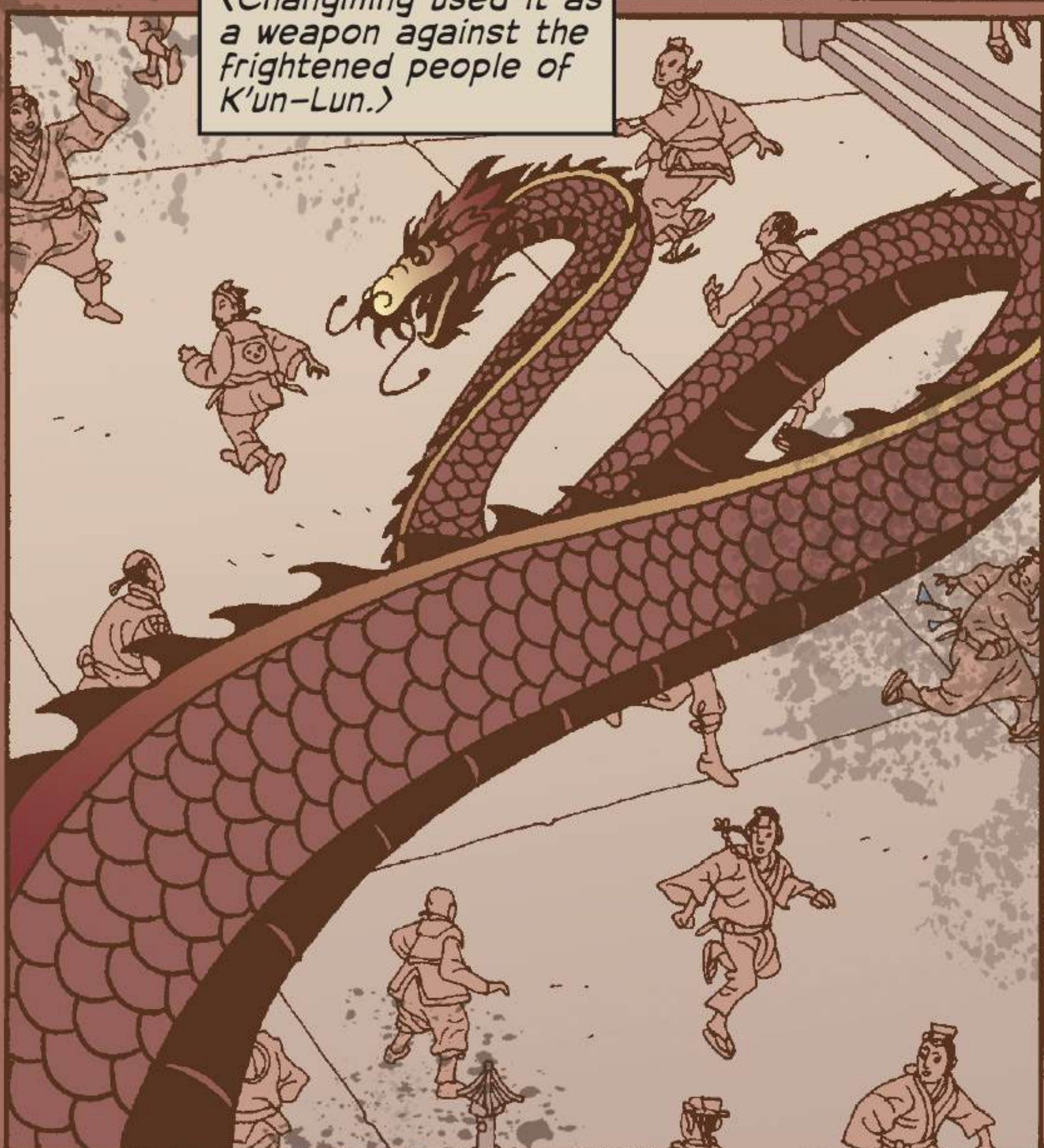


Creatures, drawn to
moral rot like vultures
to carrion.

<The most horrifying of the creatures was a great dragon named **Shou-Lao**, the Undying.>



<Changming used it as a weapon against the frightened people of K'un-Lun.>

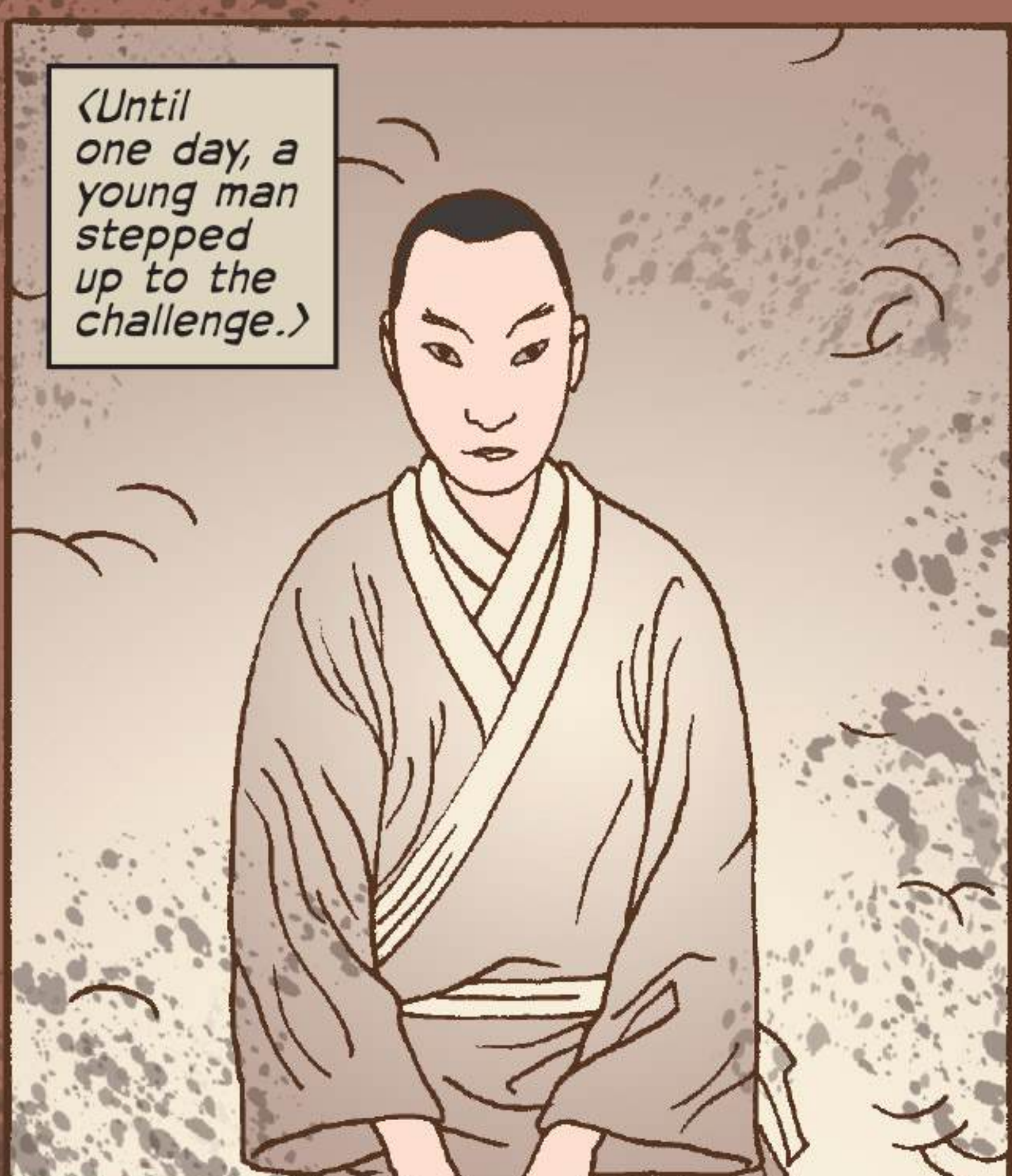


<With the dragon's help, Changming was able to seize control of the city in a very short time.>

<Hope seemed lost.>



<Until one day, a young man stepped up to the challenge.>



<And, weaponless, approached the dragon in the cave where it lay during its diurnal slumber...>





No. No!
Not now!



Not another fight.
Not now. I can hardly
move my arms without
blinding pain.



HEY. THE OLD MAN
DOESN'T FIGHT. YOU'RE
MAKING A MIS--

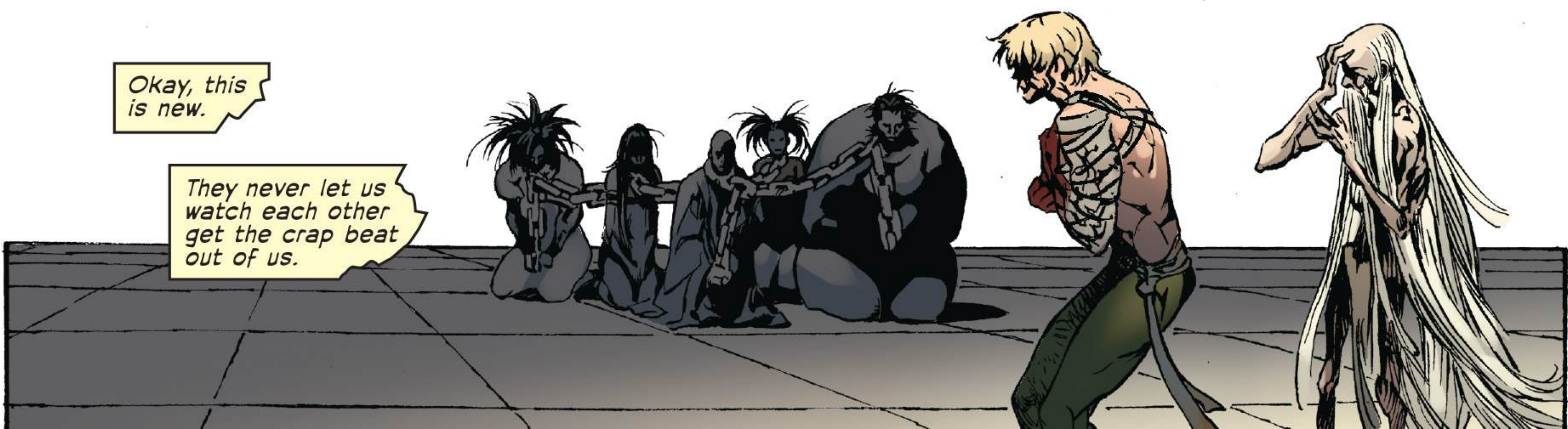


SILENCE!
CHANGMING SAYS BRING
BOTH. WE
BRING
BOTH.



Okay, this
is new.

They never let us
watch each other
get the crap beat
out of us.





I HEREBY
DECLARE...
**A DEATH
MATCH!**

ONLY **ONE**
WILL LEAVE
THIS ARENA
ALIVE!

I have no idea if Quan is
the real thing, or just a **plant**
meant to give me false hope.

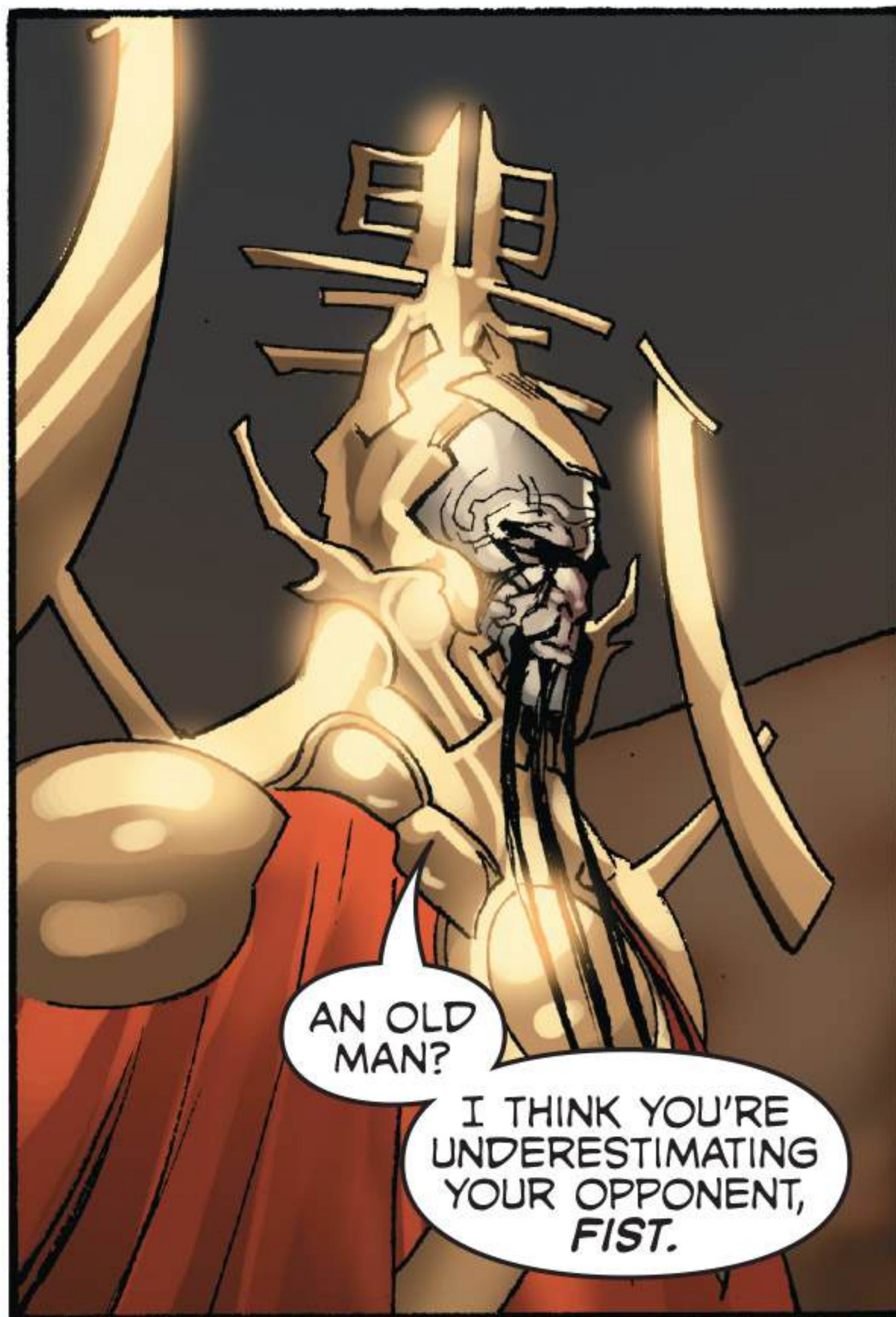


But I am
sure of
one thing.



I DON'T CARE WHAT
YOU DO TO ME. BURN
MY CHEST, KISS MY
WH...

BUT I AM
NOT FIGHTING
AN OLD MAN.



AN OLD
MAN?

I THINK YOU'RE
UNDERESTIMATING
YOUR OPPONENT,
FIST.



Huh?



SORRY,
YOUNG FIST.

I'VE BEEN
WAITING FOR THIS
CHANCE AT FREEDOM
FOR *FAR TOO*
LONG.

鐵拳24





730 A.D. A small village near the city of Fanyan in northern China.

There is the nightmare sound of thundering hooves.

The invaders are approaching.



The people of this village don't know the politics of it.

They don't know that a garrison general named An Lushan has decided to exploit large holes in the otherwise mighty armor of the Tang Dynasty.



They don't know that An Lushan's strategy is to raid small towns for supplies.

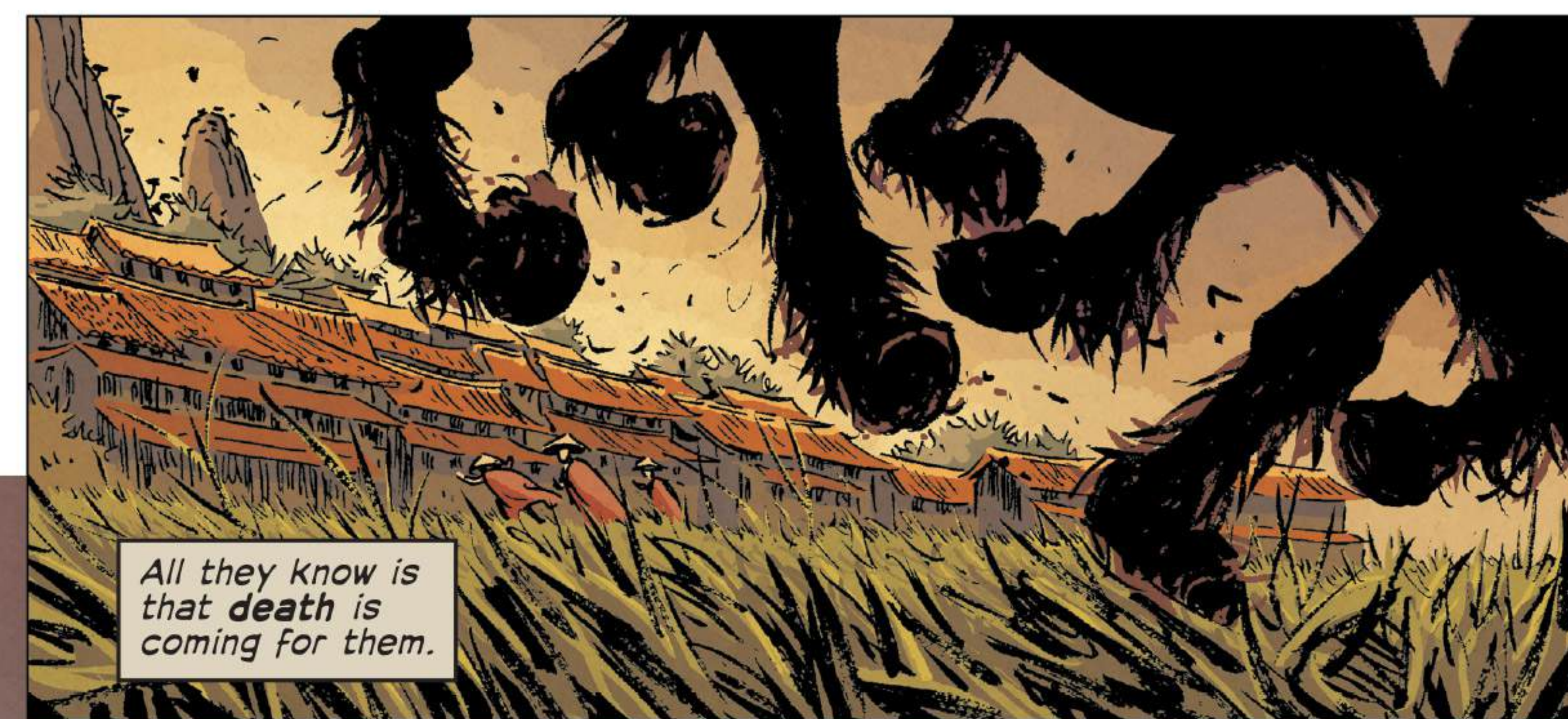
As well as for any male strong enough to be pressed into military service--no matter his age.



They don't know the whys or the hows.



They'll never read about themselves in the history books.



All they know is that death is coming for them.



And the only thing they know how to do is pray.

But who will hear their pleas?

THE IMMORTAL
IRON FIST

LI PARK,
THE RELUCTANT
WEAPON

VS.
UNSTOPPABLE
FORCES OF
EVIL

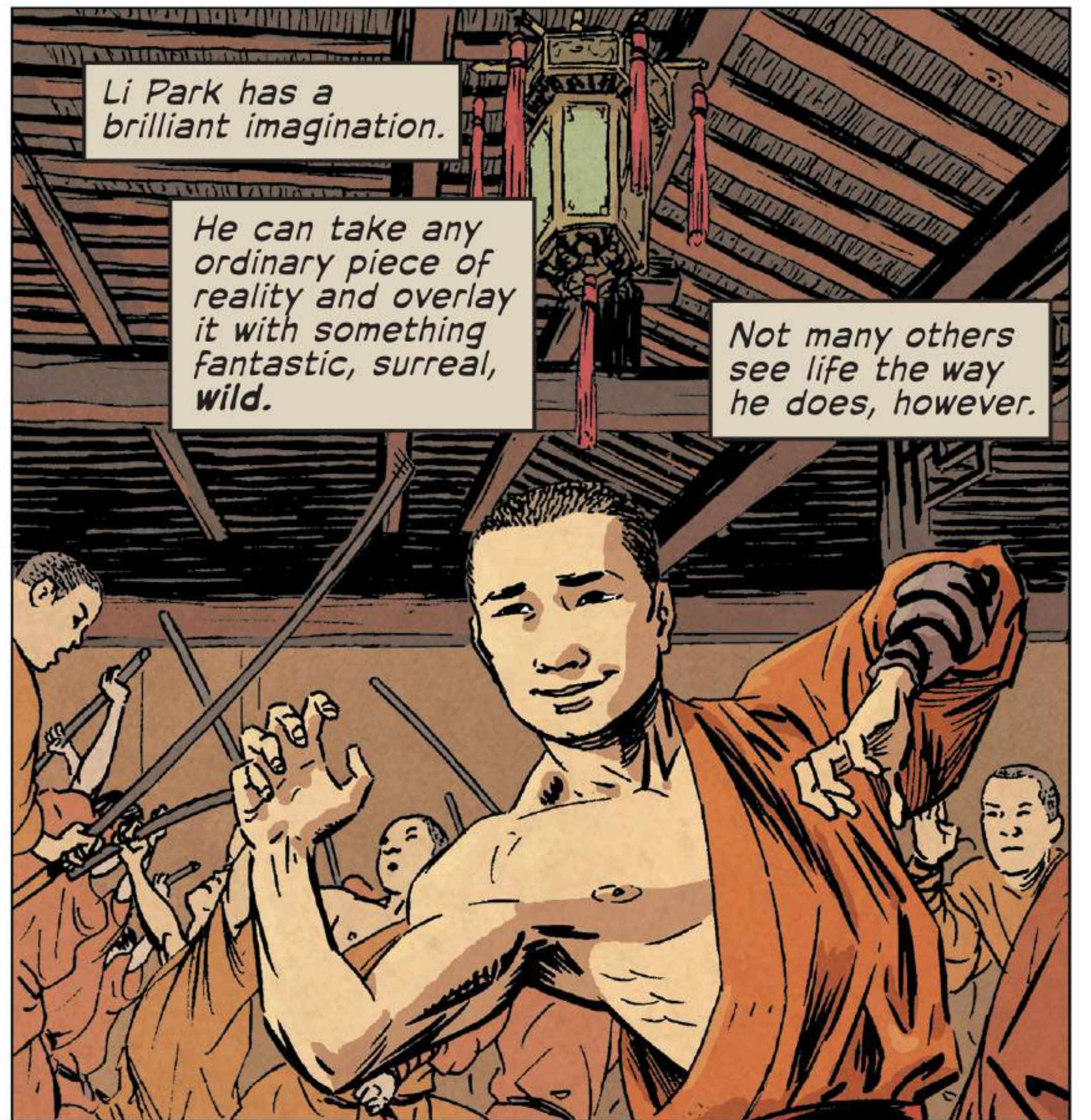


The mystical city of K'un-Lun.

In another place,
another young man
faces his demons.



WHAT? WHY
DO YOU LOOK
AT ME THAT
WAY?



Li Park has a
brilliant imagination.

He can take any
ordinary piece of
reality and overlay
it with something
fantastic, surreal,
wild.

Not many others
see life the way
he does, however.



Including his younger
brother, Jianjun.

YOU WERE
DAYDREAMING
AGAIN, WEREN'T
YOU?

Park would be a brilliant
artist. But this is not an
art school. It is a school
of kung fu.

And Park is not
a very good
kung fu student.







K'un-Lun. A week later.

The plague hits without warning.

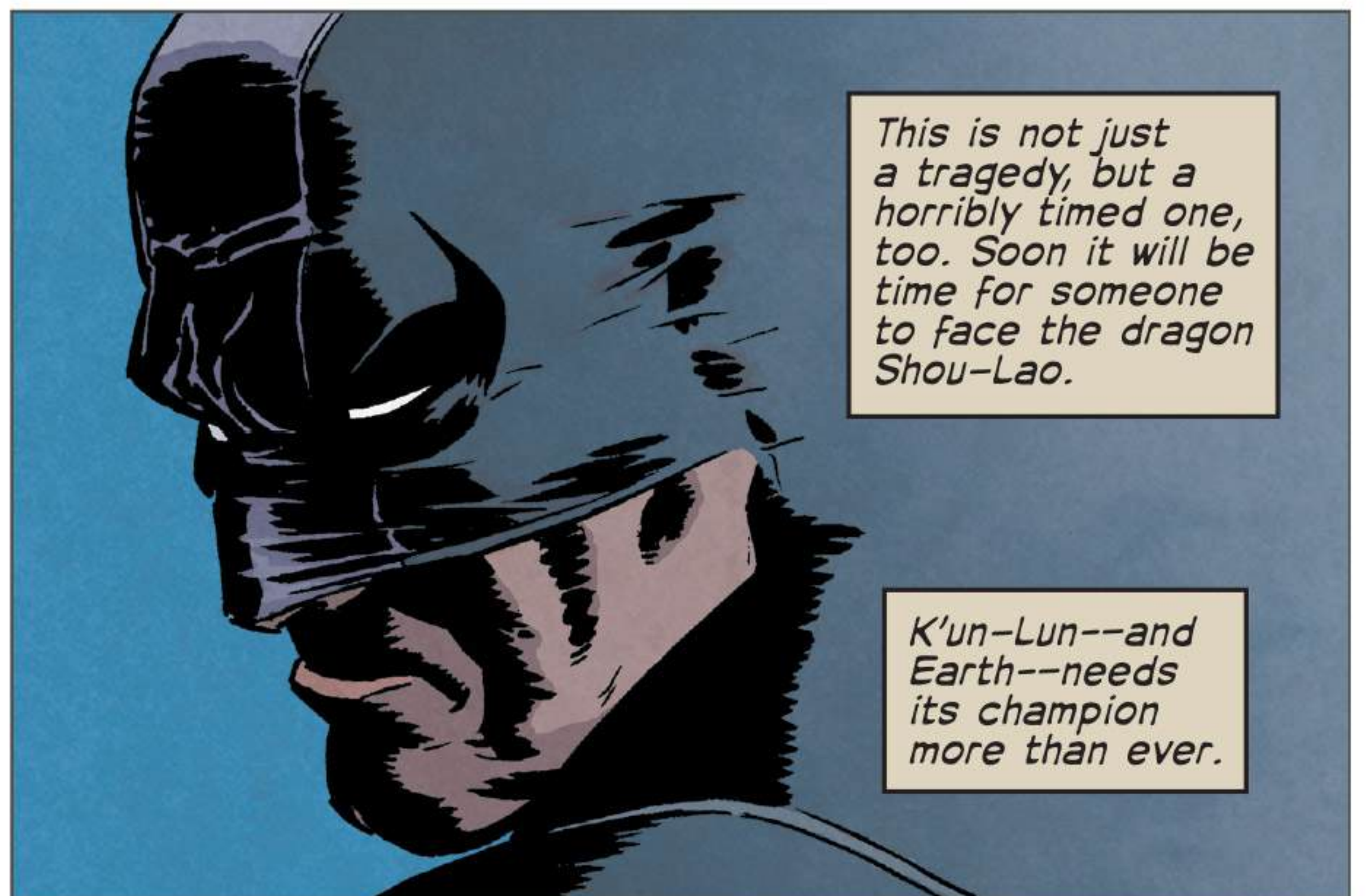
Hundreds fall and thousands become too ill to move.



Such a thing is not unheard of in K'un-Lun.

But it is rare. And portends great disaster on Earth--which this great city merges with once every ten years.

And the merging is to happen in a matter of weeks.



This is not just a tragedy, but a horribly timed one, too. Soon it will be time for someone to face the dragon Shou-Lao.

K'un-Lun--and Earth--needs its champion more than ever.



KNOCK KNOCK

But all of the Thunderer's top students are sick or dead.



And there is only one student left who is remotely qualified.

WHAT? ME?



Park belongs to the small percentage of K'un-Lun's citizens who are unaffected by the plague.

There are only two students healthy enough to train.

The choice is clear. Though the Thunderer does give much thought to the six-year-old.



MASTER, I CAN'T...

YOU CAN. YOU WILL. **FOCUS!**



K'UN-LUN WILL NOT THROW AWAY ITS CHANCE FOR A CHAMPION.

YOU FACE THE DRAGON IN TWO DAYS.



YES, THUNDERER.

As children--just a few years ago--Park and Jianjun would run through the hills, pretending to be the dragon and its challenger.



Two days later.

Park never imagined his pretending would one day become real.

I USED TO BE THE DRAGON. AND YOU ALWAYS KNOCKED ME ON MY BOTTOM.

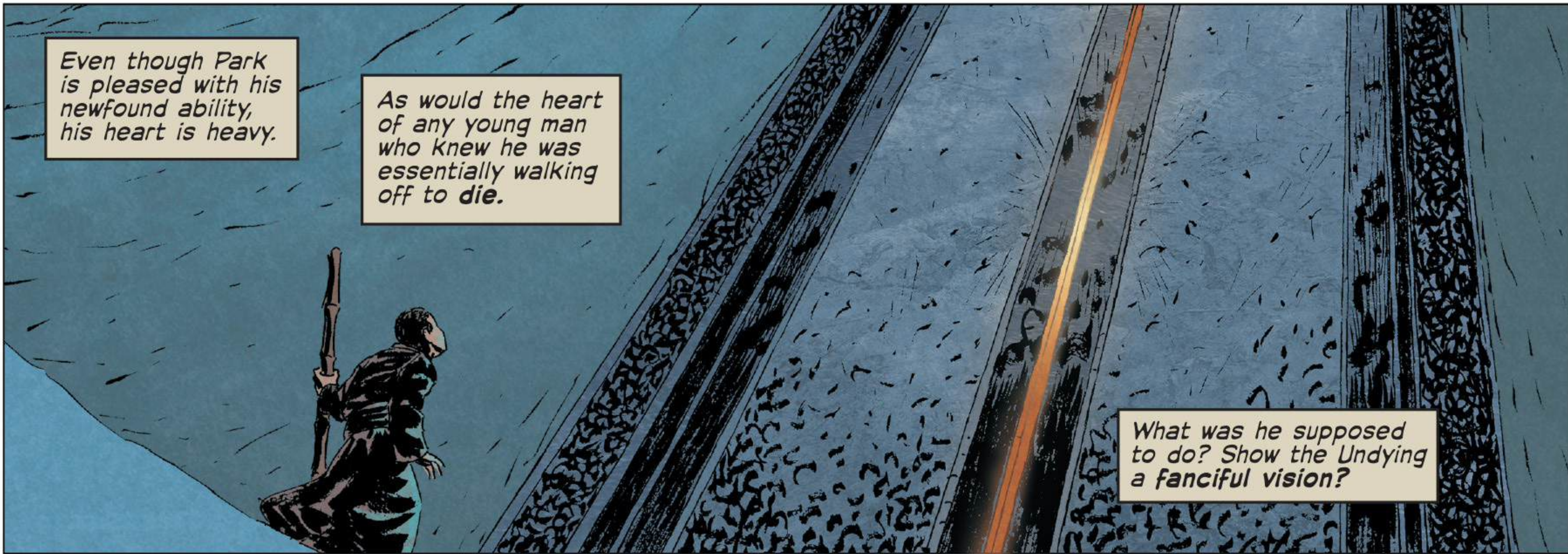




BROTHER,
LET ME TAKE
YOU HOME...

NO. I'LL BE
FINE. YOU HAVE
TO GO. WE'RE ALL
DEPENDING
ON YOU.

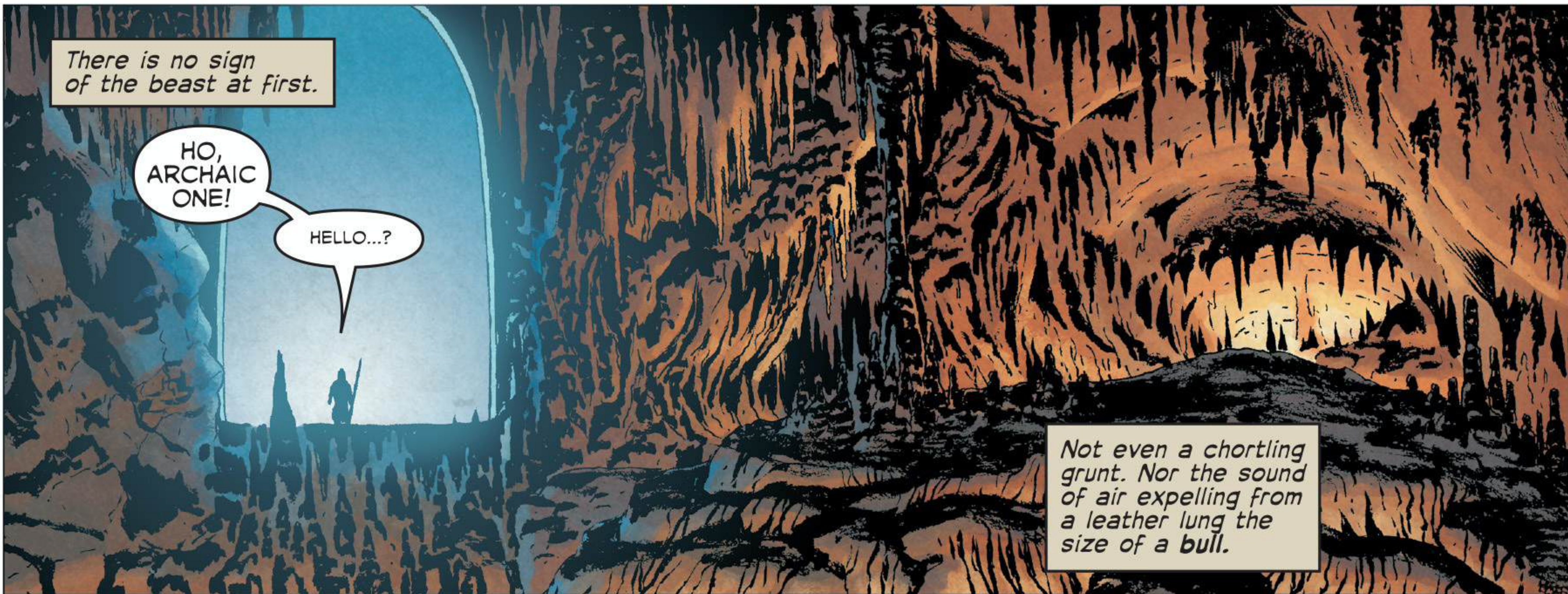
HONOR
US.



Even though Park
is pleased with his
newfound ability,
his heart is heavy.

As would the heart
of any young man
who knew he was
essentially walking
off to die.

What was he supposed
to do? Show the Undying
a fanciful vision?



There is no sign
of the beast at first.

HO,
ARCHAIC
ONE!

HELLO...?

Not even a chortling
grunt. Nor the sound
of air expelling from
a leather lung the
size of a bull.



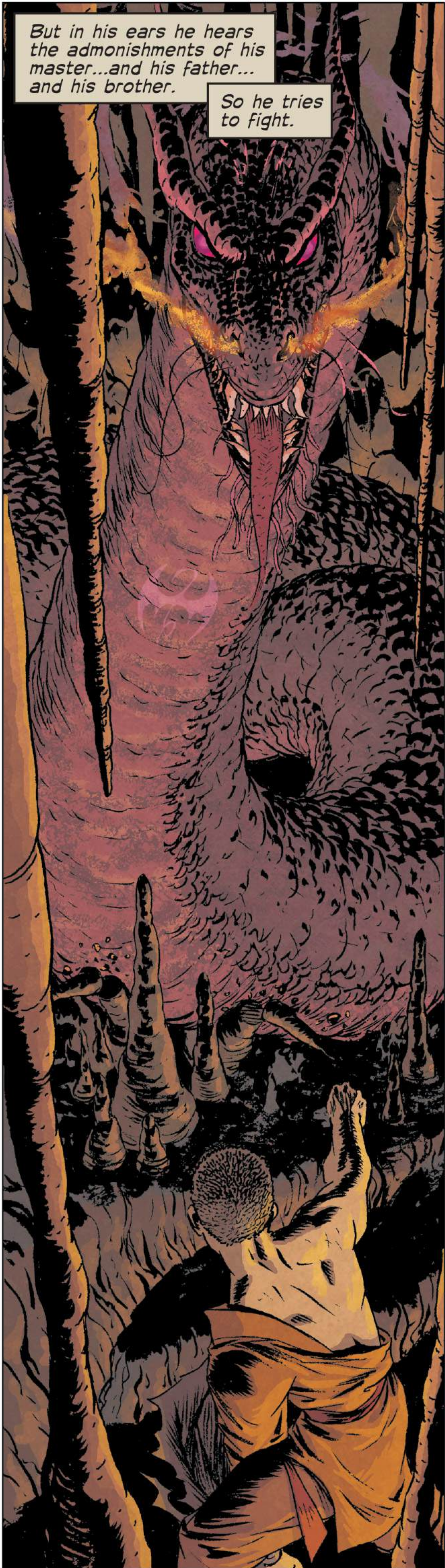
Which of course, is
the dragon's strategy.



The dragon
has fought
challengers
for centuries.



Park has the feeling the dragon enjoys this.



But in his ears he hears the admonishments of his master...and his father...and his brother.

So he tries to fight.



The dragon doesn't try.

It just fights.



A few inches more and the dragon's claws would have swept across his heart and lungs.

He is thankful for his brother's reminder about speed.



Still, Park knows this is quickly turning to disaster. He hears the Thunderer screaming inside his skull...

FOCUS!

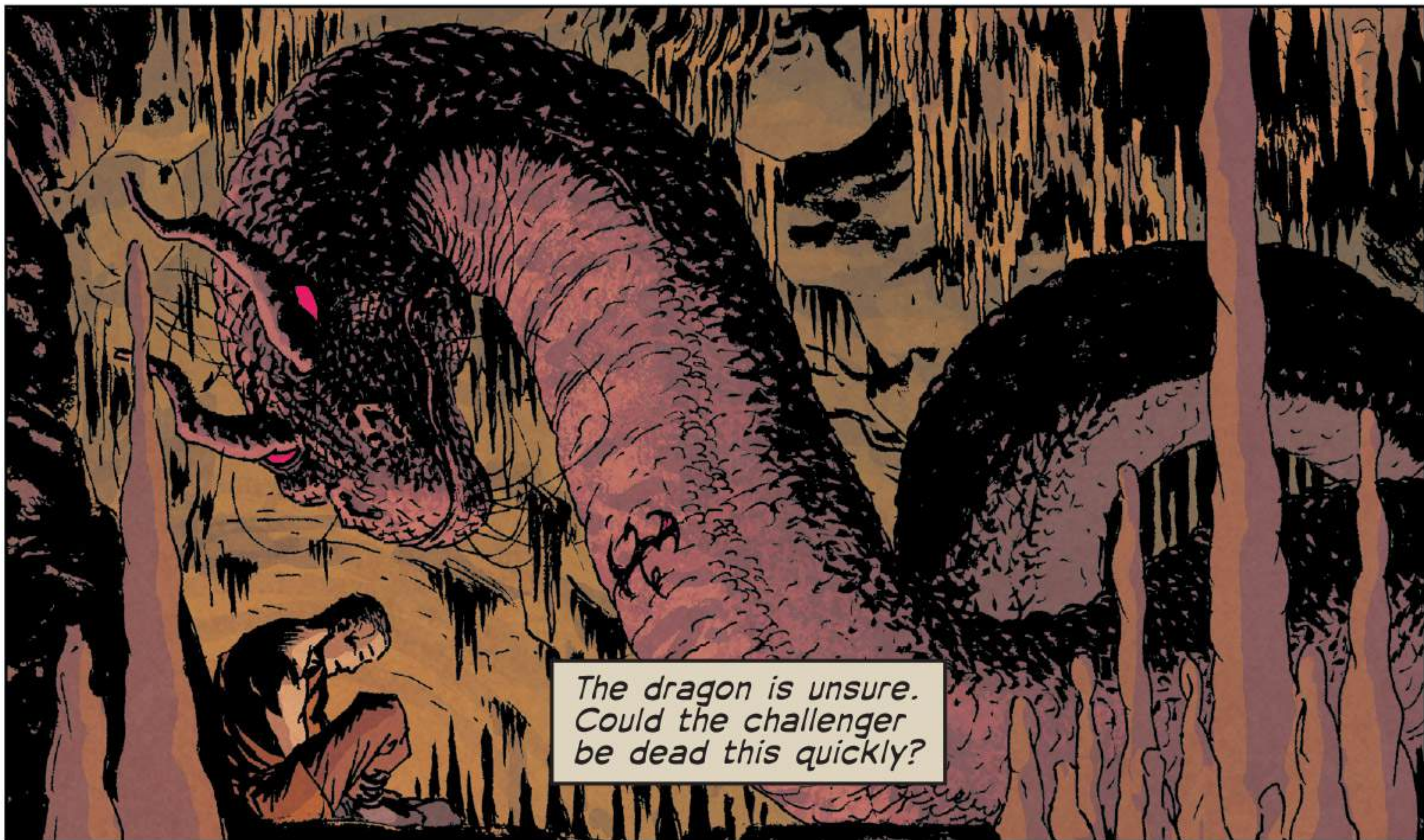


Park will focus.



He will show the dragon a fanciful image...

...using the berries and noodles he'd packed for a snack.



The dragon is unsure. Could the challenger be dead this quickly?



No! He is not!



It's a clever misdirection, using the materials at hand...and it confuses the Undying long enough for Park to make his move.



Park presses his chest to the dragon's scar-- the only way to block the chi it receives from its disembodied heart.

Hang on, he tells himself. Just ignore the agony...



...pretend you're asleep...that this is just a dream...



...and soon it will be over, and you'll wake up.



In a fog of agony, Park rises to claim his prize.

The prize he never really wanted.



He plunges his hands into the dragon's red-hot molten heart.

The pain is unlike anything he'd ever imagined.



So he imagines something else.



That day, Li Park became K'un-Lun's new champion.

And the first ever to pass out after conquering the dragon.



And though there is talk that he might not live long enough for it to mean anything...



...once again, Park defies all expectations.



Park also realizes that the dragon's chi fuels his imagination. His visions are stronger than ever.

It's an unexpected boon. And then...

BROTHER, YOU HAVE A VISITOR.



RISE, CHAMPION.



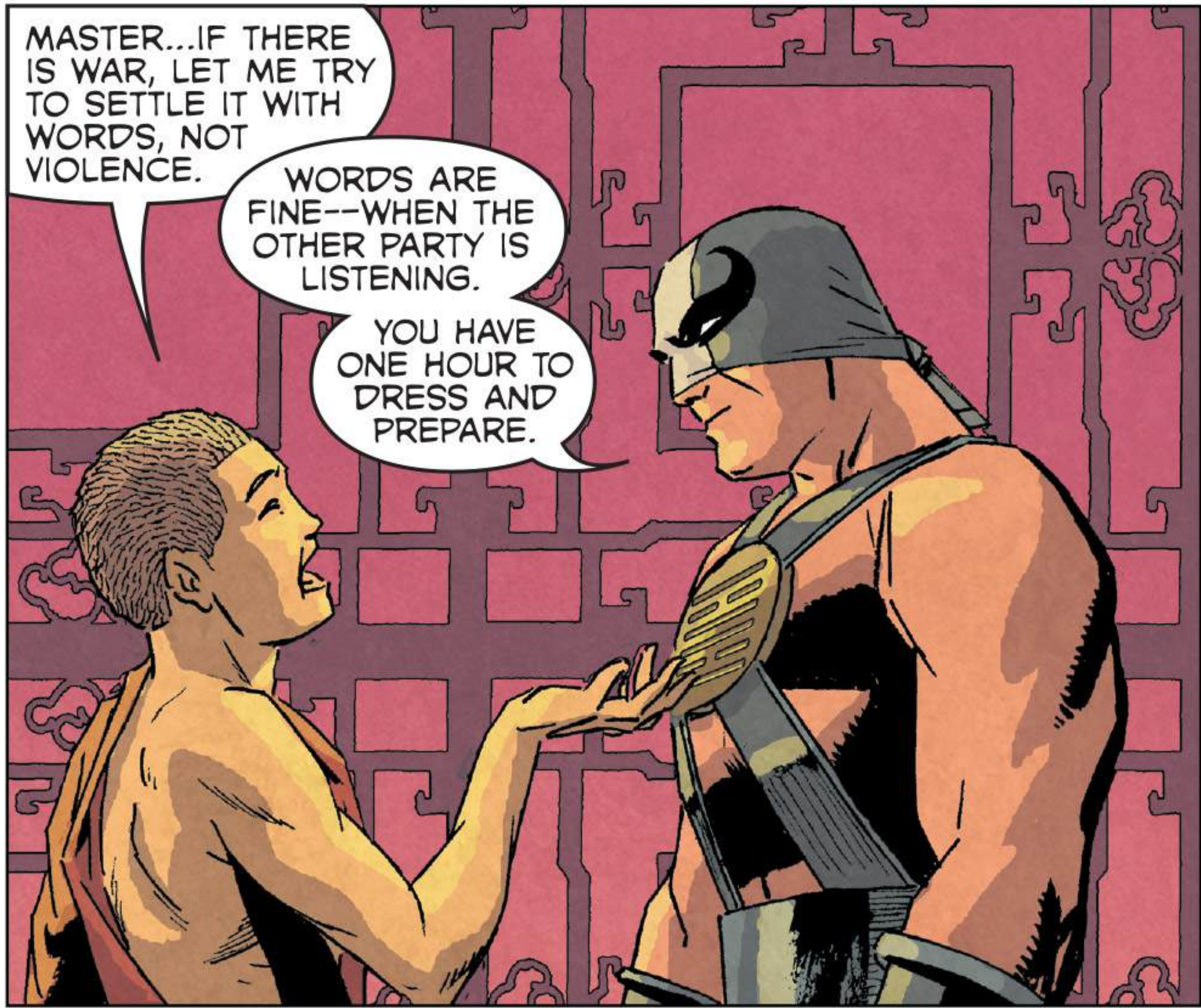
The Thunderer explains that the doorway to Earth is nearly open. And as suspected, innocents are being slaughtered by the thousands.

And then the Thunderer explains what Park must do.

YOU WANT ME TO... WHAT?



YOU ARE OUR IMMORTAL WEAPON. THIS IS WHAT YOU MUST DO TO FULFILL YOUR DESTINY.



MASTER...IF THERE IS WAR, LET ME TRY TO SETTLE IT WITH WORDS, NOT VIOLENCE.

WORDS ARE FINE--WHEN THE OTHER PARTY IS LISTENING.

YOU HAVE ONE HOUR TO DRESS AND PREPARE.



Park gazes out at his city and thinks:

"Sure."

"Stand between the innocent and the unstoppable forces of evil."



"Give all you can to hold back the hordes."

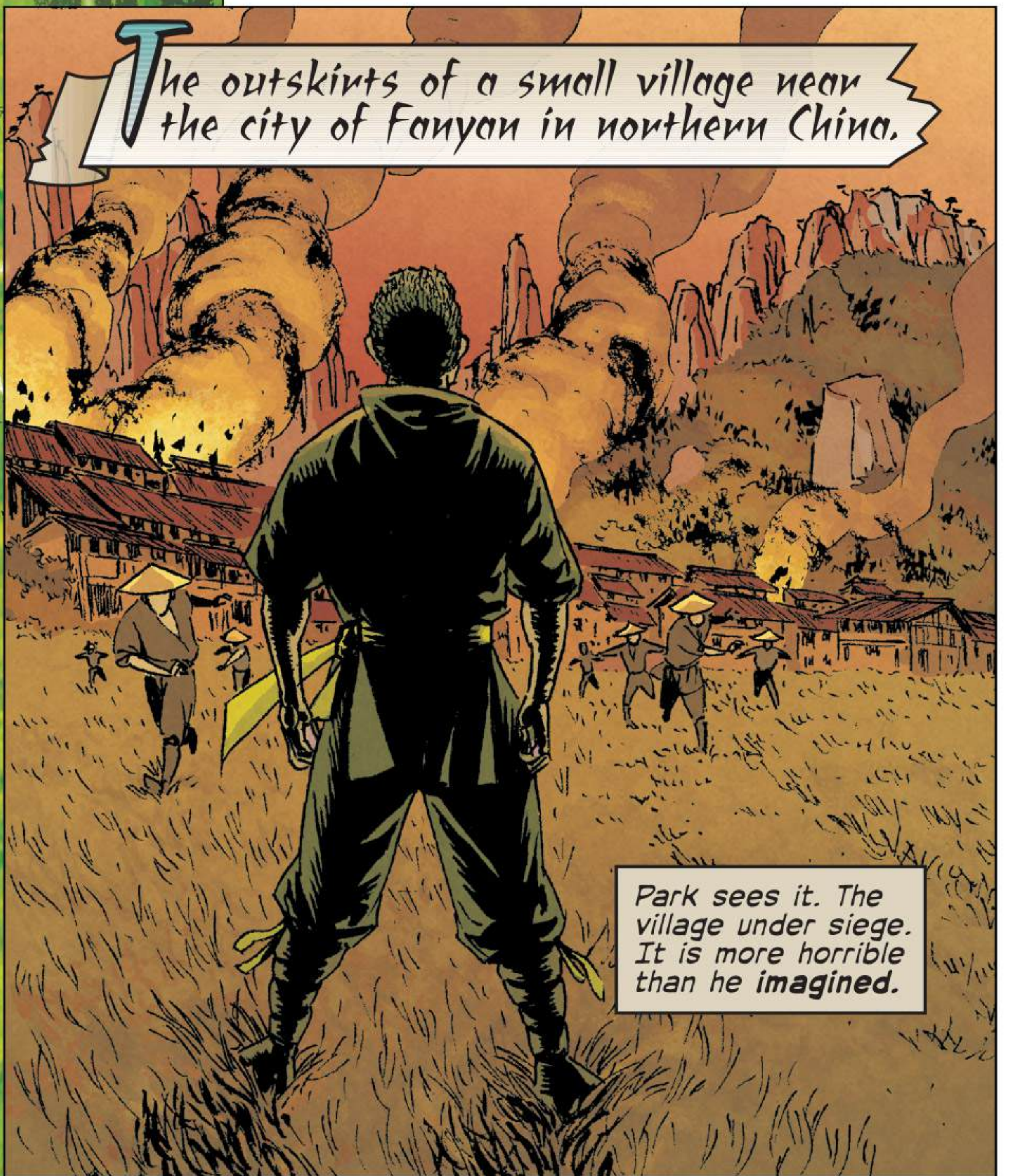


"This is what you must do to fulfill your destiny."

Oh, is that all?
Park thinks.



How is a man who loathes war supposed to get mixed up in one?



The outskirts of a small village near the city of Fanyan in northern China.

Park sees it. The village under siege. It is more horrible than he imagined.



Then it occurs to him...the perfect plan to peace.



YOU AND
YOUR MEN WILL
STOP HERE.



Oh? AND
DO YOU INTEND
TO **STOP US?**

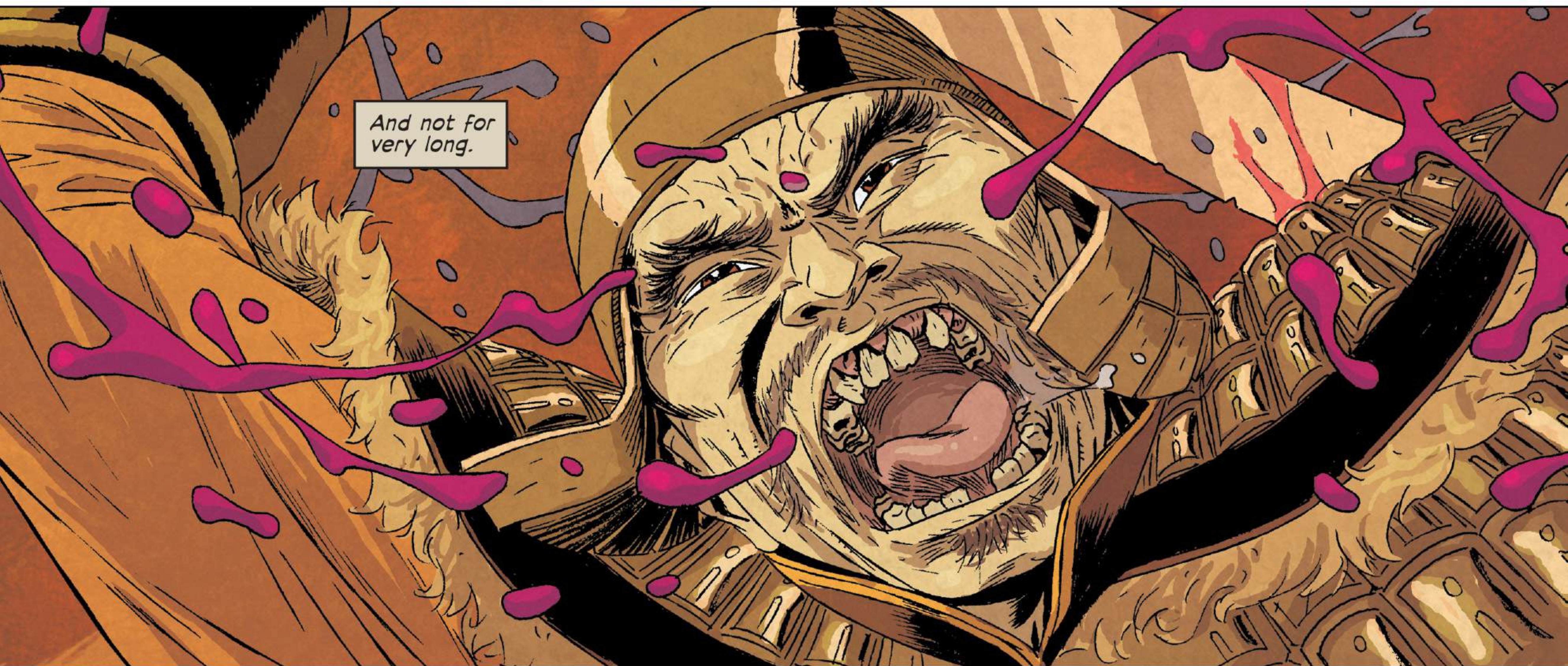


The invaders
laugh, but Park
doesn't mind.

In fact,
laughter
only helps.

NO. BUT
WHEN YOU
SEE WHAT
WE HAVE TO
OFFER...





Park realizes his grand mistake--despite what the Thunderer tried to teach him.

He insisted on *visions* when this world really needed *action*.

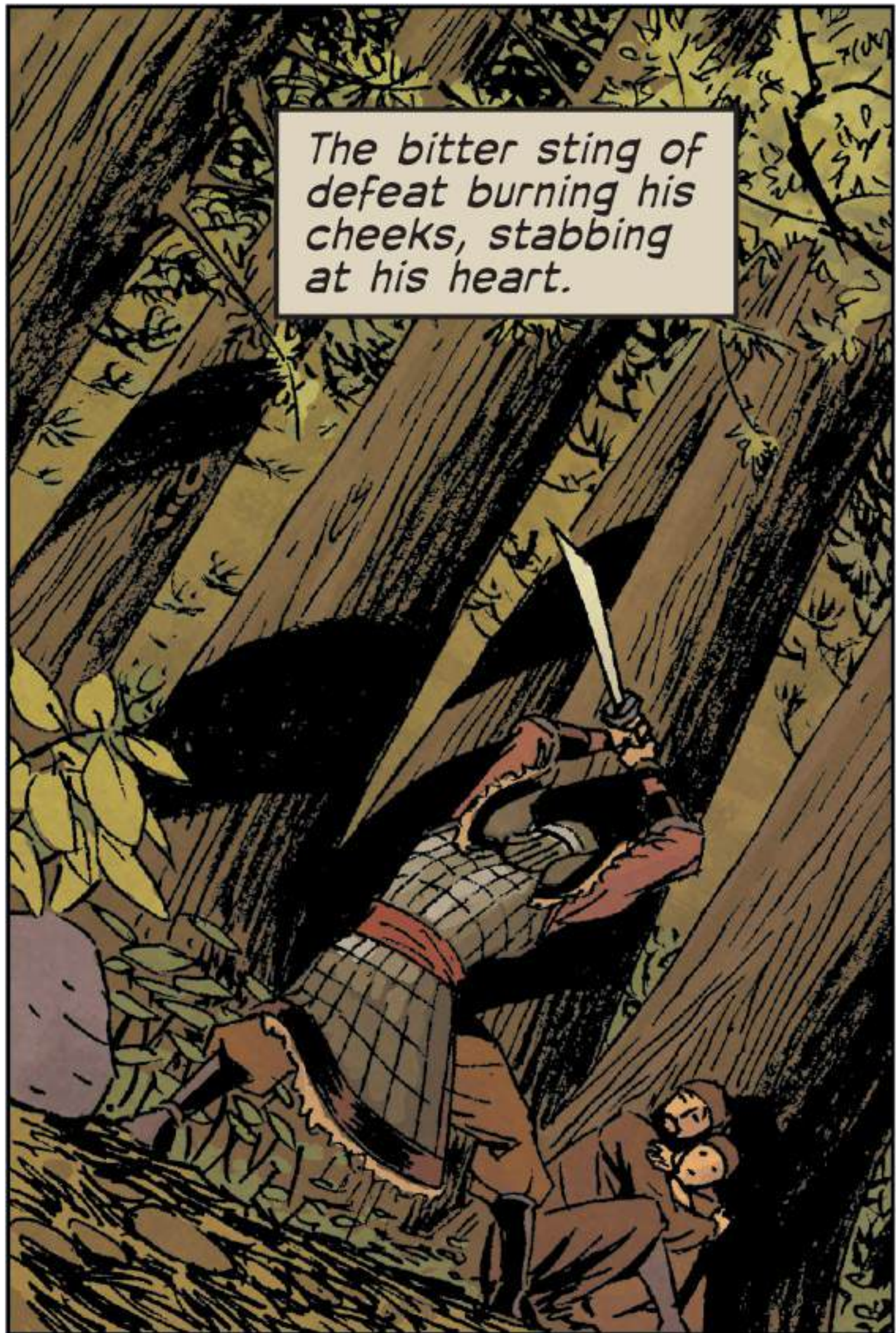
It was crying for a savior, and here he stands, still trying to *negotiate*.

But you don't negotiate with a sword.

While Park created his vision, half the village was able to flee...

...however, half was not.

The death toll of the **An Shi Rebellion** would only be surpassed over a thousand years later by the conflict known as World War II.





Park tells them, "If you trust me, I will show you a place of peace and glory."



"The journey will be difficult. We will be beset on all sides by the forces of evil."



"Our journey will also be long-- not all of you will live to see the end."



"But I will protect you, and fight for every one of you, until we take our final step."



ARE YOU SURE YOU KNOW THE WAY? WE SEEM TO BE WANDERING IN CIRCLES.

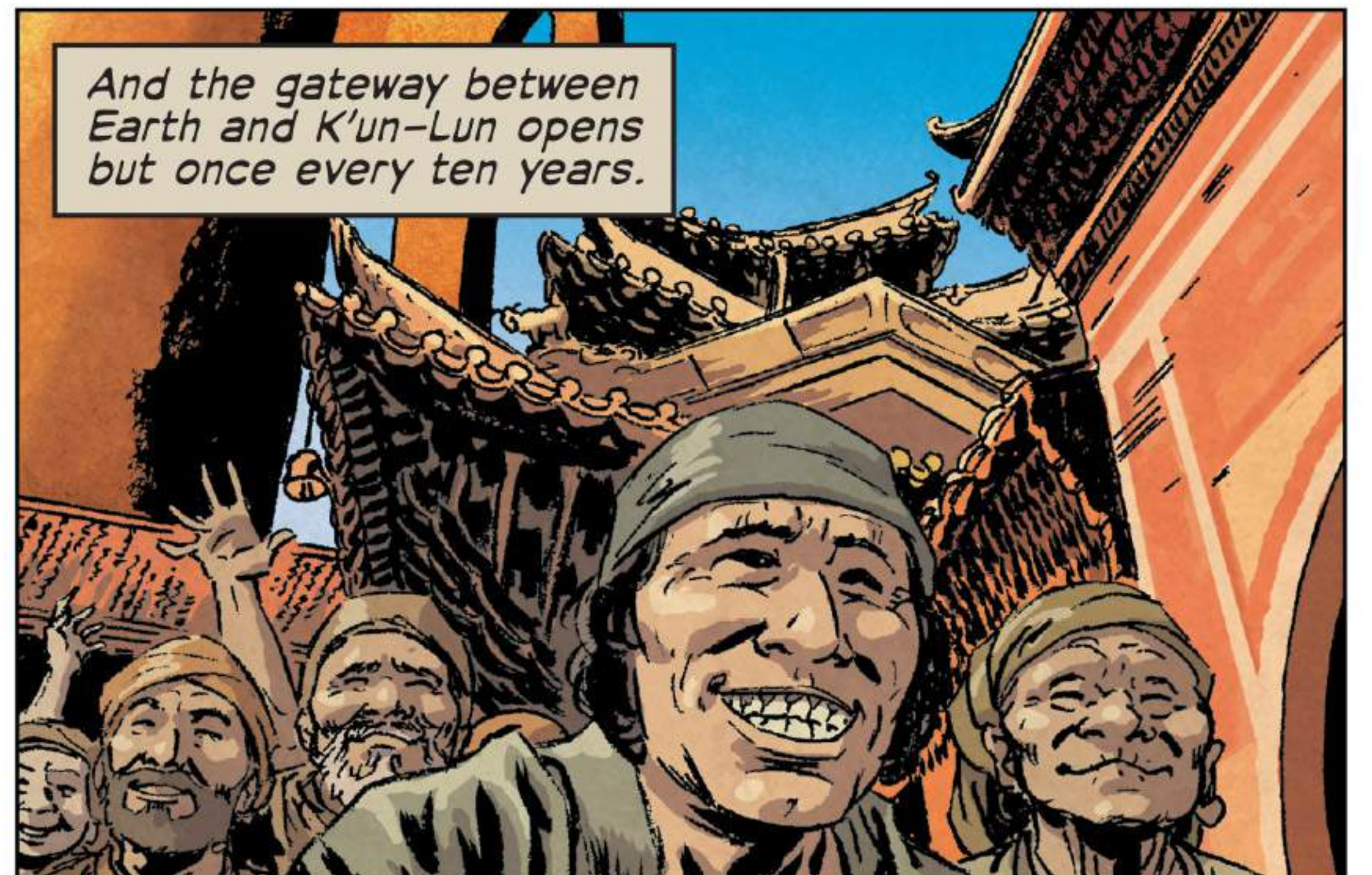
DO NOT DESPAIR. I CAN SEE IT CLEARLY IN MY MIND, FRIEND.



"AND ONCE YOU SEE K'UN-LUN, YOU WILL NOT FORGET THE WAY, EITHER."



Park knows that his mystical city is the only safe place for his weary charges.



And the gateway between Earth and K'un-Lun opens but once every ten years.



But at least this vision is real and true. And worth every agonizing step through the war-torn lands of China.



MASTER...?



WELCOME HOME, LI PARK.

The mystical city of K'un-Lun. Now.

So all hail the Immortal
Iron Fist, Li Park.

The reluctant champion
who not only saved a
Chinese village, but a
mystical city of Heaven.

Remember him, all you
citizens of K'un-Lun--
and your children, and
their children.

For most of you hail from
the members of this Weapon's
wandering tribe. It is you who
repopulated a city that lost
tens of thousands to plague.

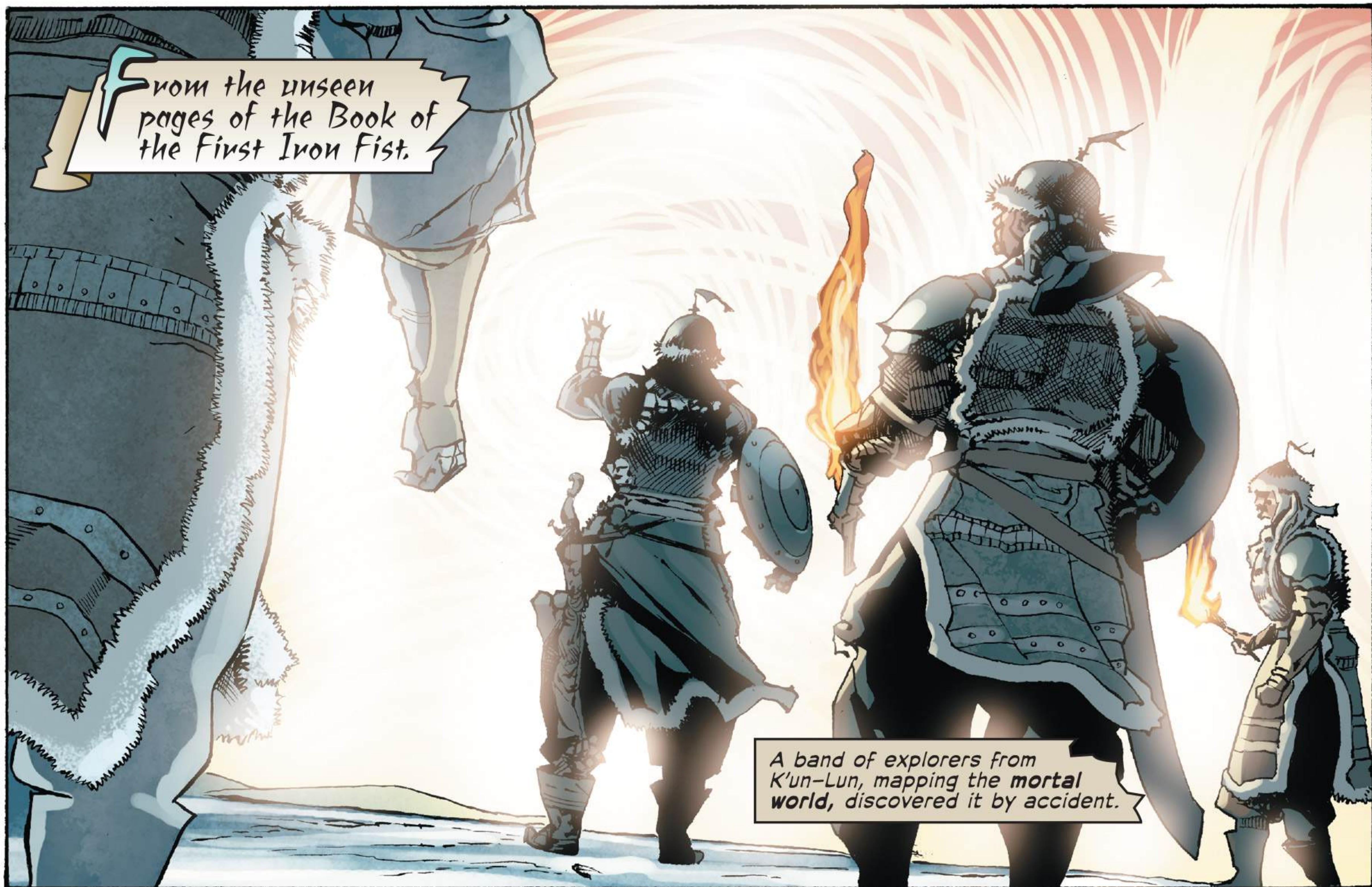
It is you who crave
peace and dignity.

And it is you
who are willing
to fight for it.



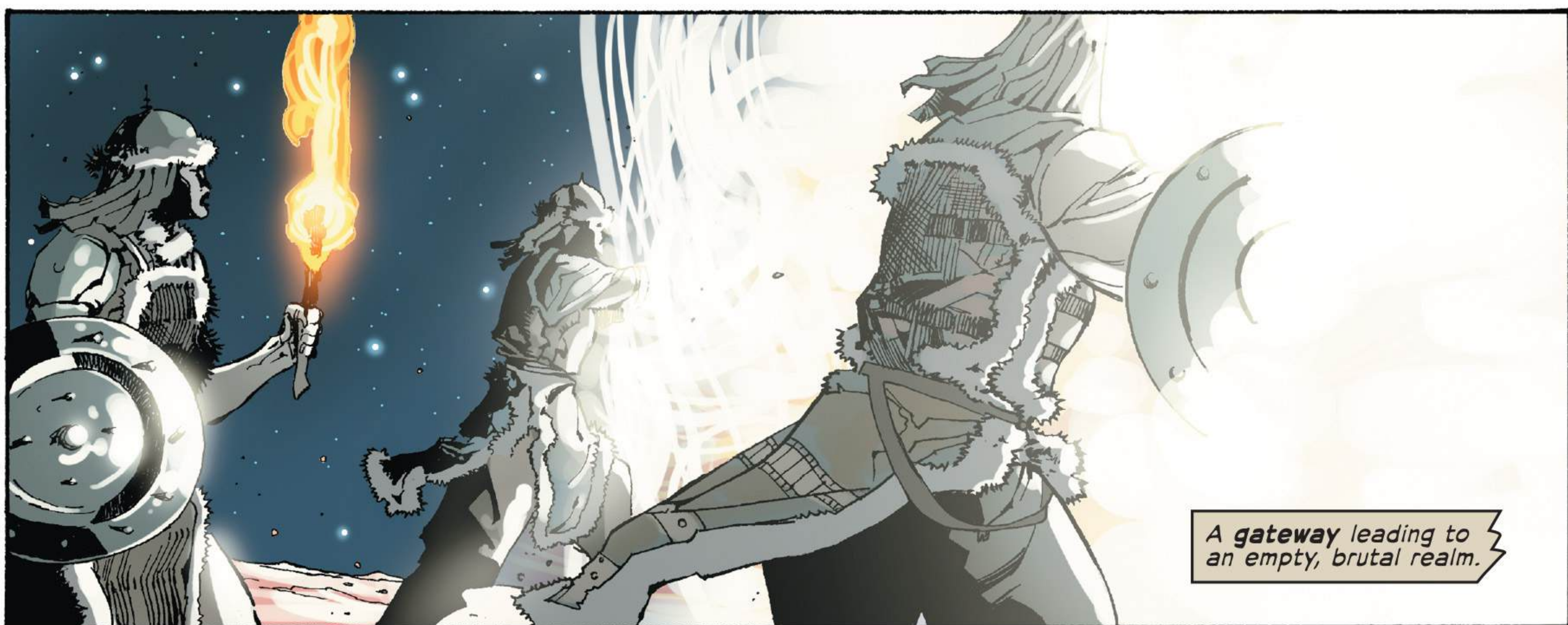
The End.





From the unseen pages of the Book of the First Iron Fist.

A band of explorers from K'un-Lun, mapping the mortal world, discovered it by accident.



A gateway leading to an empty, brutal realm.



Later, it would be mockingly referred to as the Eighth City.

Of course, those who mocked this place never saw it with their own eyes.

That's because this gateway led in one direction.

Down.

If you tumbled in, escape was impossible, as those first explorers witnessed.

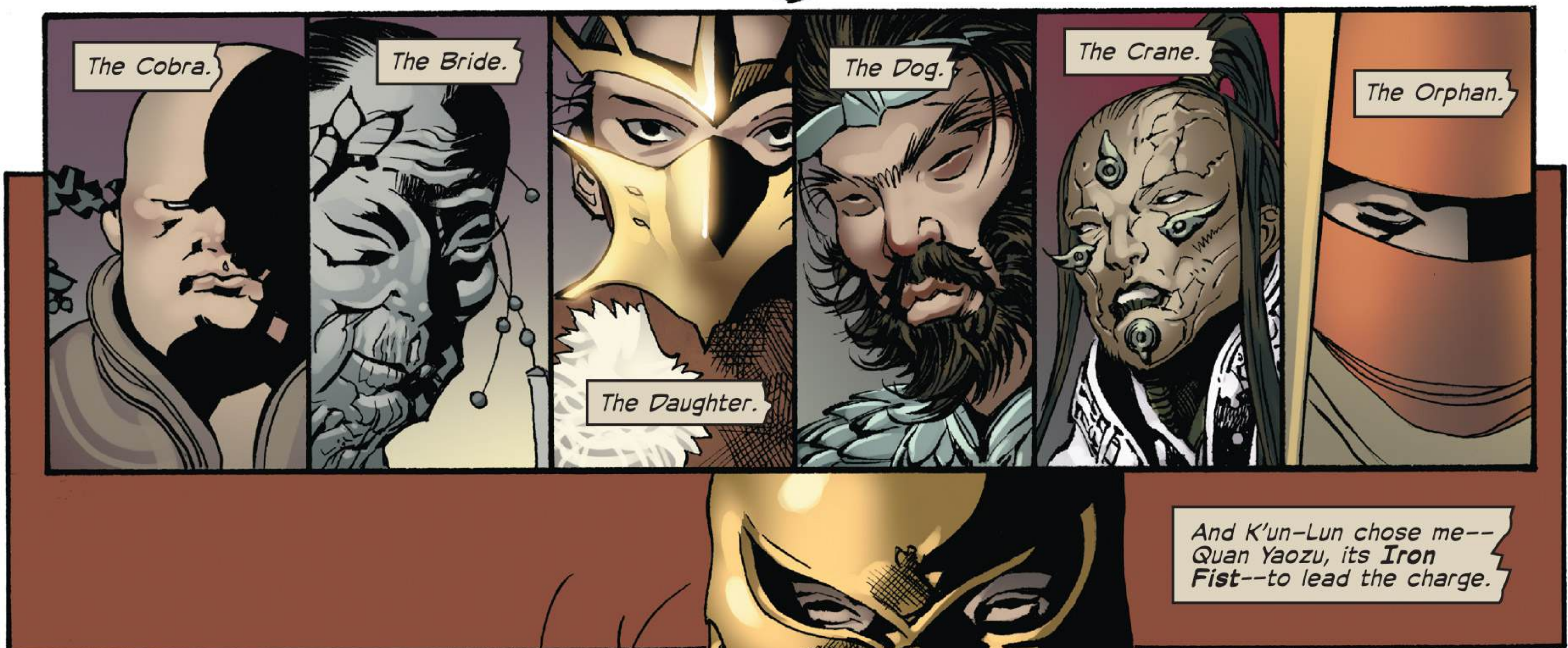
But when the surviving explorers returned to K'un-Lun many years later, the elders considered it a new hope.

What if the monsters and demons who had been tormenting K'un-Lun for years could be **banished** to this place?



K'un-Lun beseeched the other Capital Cities of Heaven for aid.

The cities--knowing that these creatures posed a threat to their own people--lent their Weapons.



And K'un-Lun chose me--Quan Yaozu, its Iron Fist--to lead the charge.



The battle to retake K'un-Lun was bloody, spanning countless days and nights.



But at long last the monsters were trapped in the so-called **Eighth City**, sealed behind a carefully constructed gate.

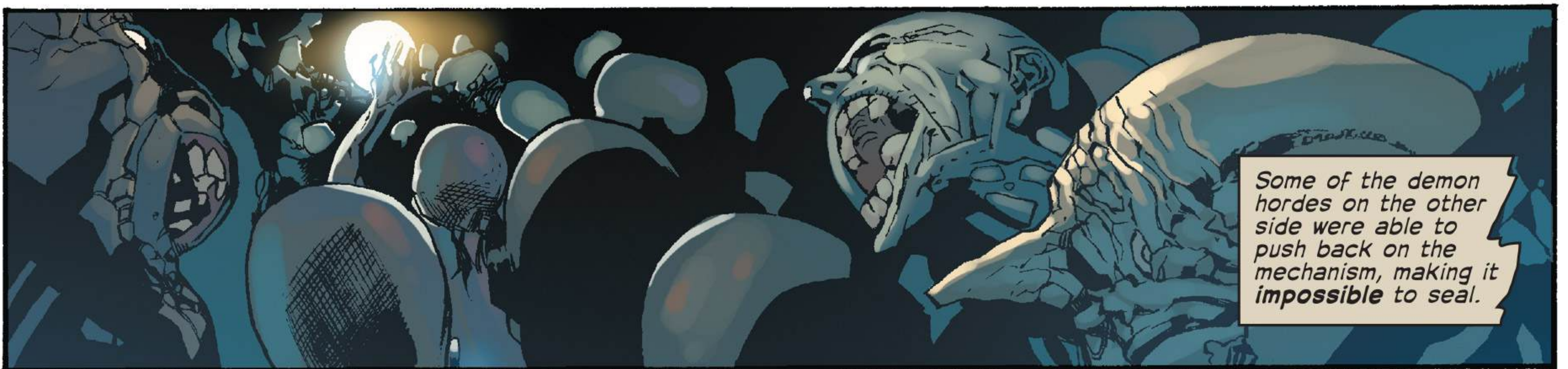


The finest minds of the Seven Cities had designed the gate so that only a **quorum** of Immortal Weapons could seal it...or open it again.

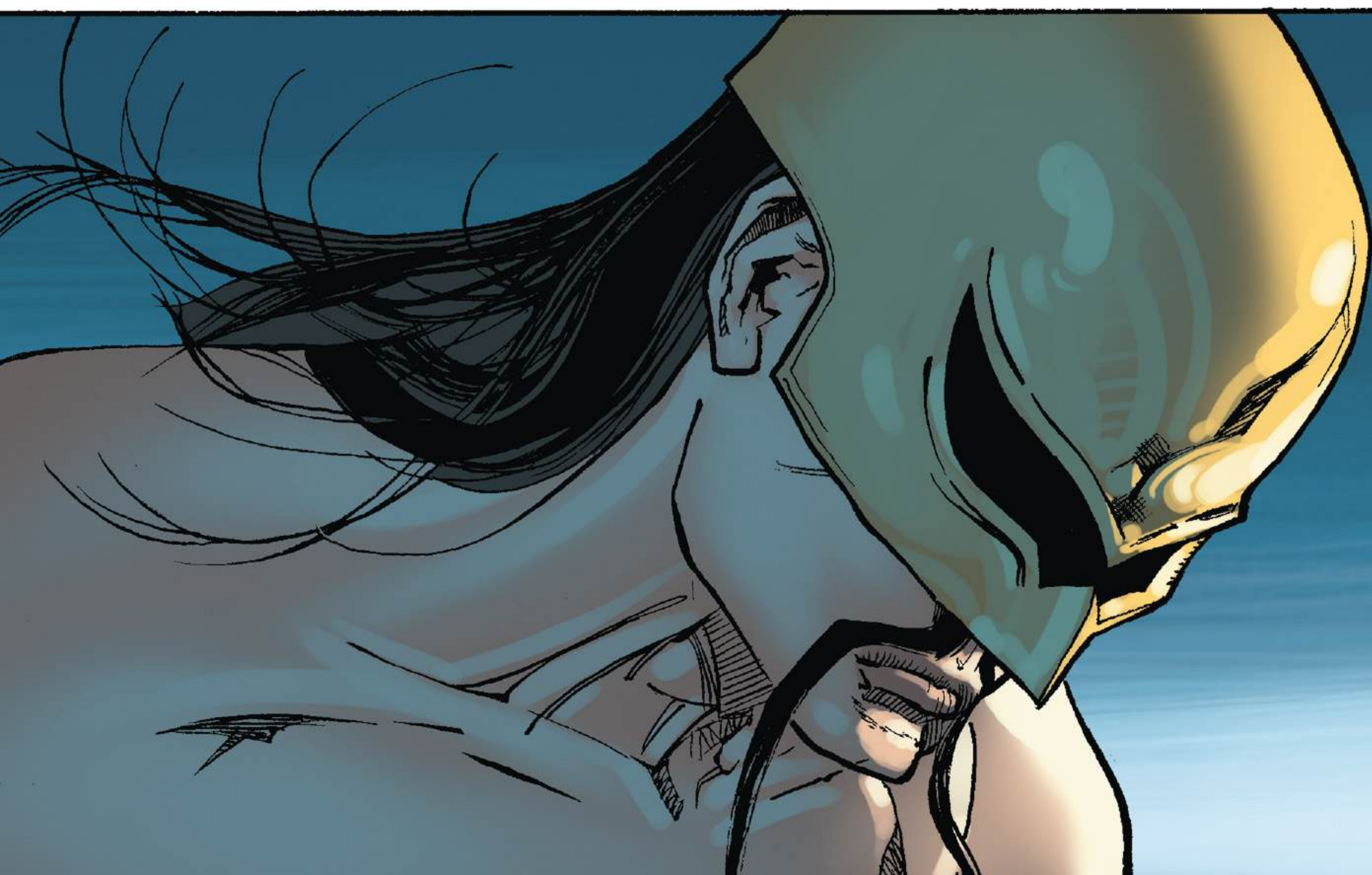


This was to ensure that no one city would control the gate...or **abuse** it.

However, there was a flaw in its design.



Some of the demon hordes on the other side were able to push back on the mechanism, making it **impossible** to seal.



To allow the gate to open again would be to risk everything—including the Seven Cities.

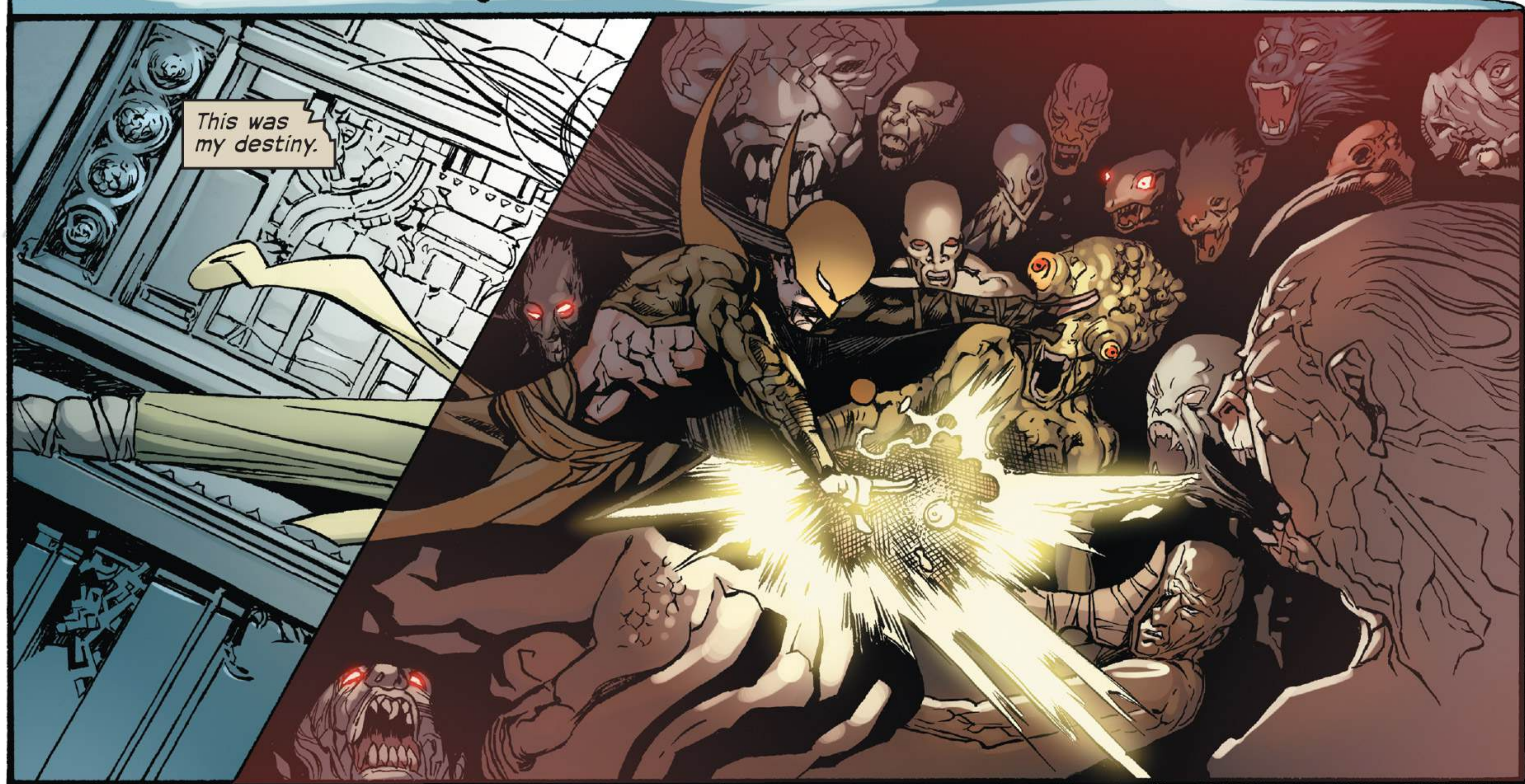
One of us would have to go to the other side to pull it shut... permanently.



The choice was clear.

My city, after all, had been plagued by these monsters.

I would see to it that they would never disturb K'un-Lun ever again.



This was my destiny.



This is what champions do.

Now. The Eighth City.

This is **Changming**. He's the ruler of the Eighth City. Or as I like to call it: Hell.

My name is Danny Rand. I'm the current Iron Fist, and I'm in the middle of an Eighth City death match, getting my ass kicked.

Again.

This is **Quan Yaozu**. He claims to be the very first Iron Fist, and he's been trapped in Hell for centuries.

DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS.

DO WHAT? SUFFER? Hah ha ha ha--

GRNCH

Haa--

URK!

There's something weird about this.

Aside from the being in Hell thing.



I've been in the presence of another Iron Fist before--**Orson Randall**--and I could sense when he was using the same chi.



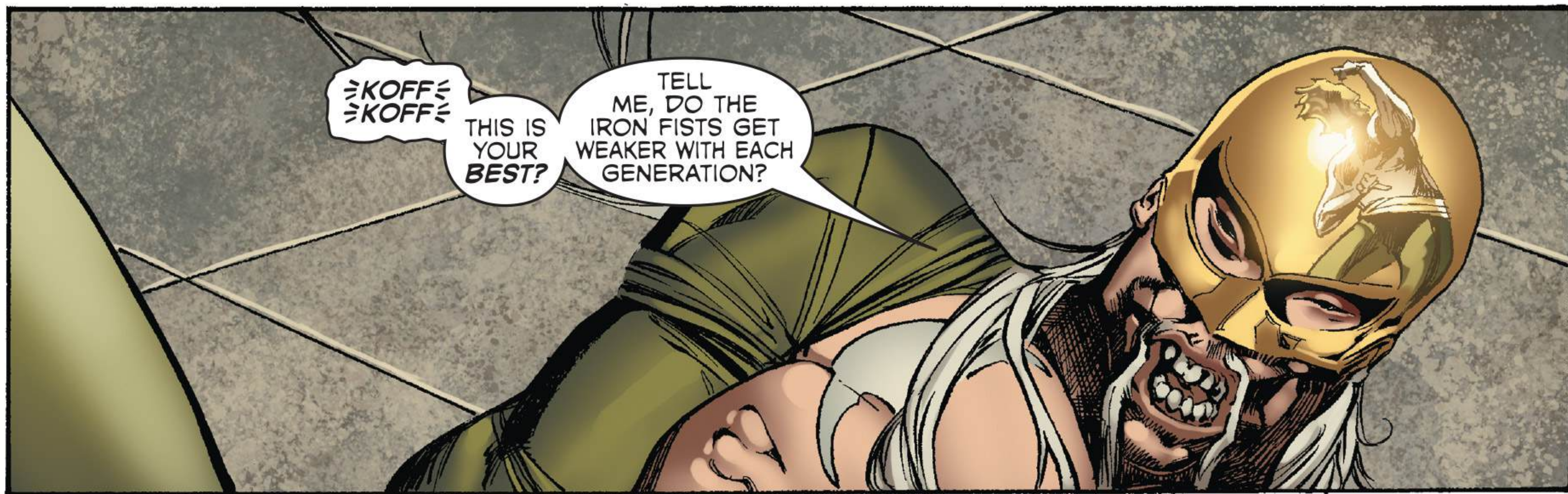
But with this guy...nothing.



He doesn't fight like a Fist, or **feel** like one.



So what's with the charade?



≡KOFF≡
≡KOFF≡

THIS IS YOUR **BEST?**

TELL ME, DO THE IRON FISTS GET WEAKER WITH EACH GENERATION?

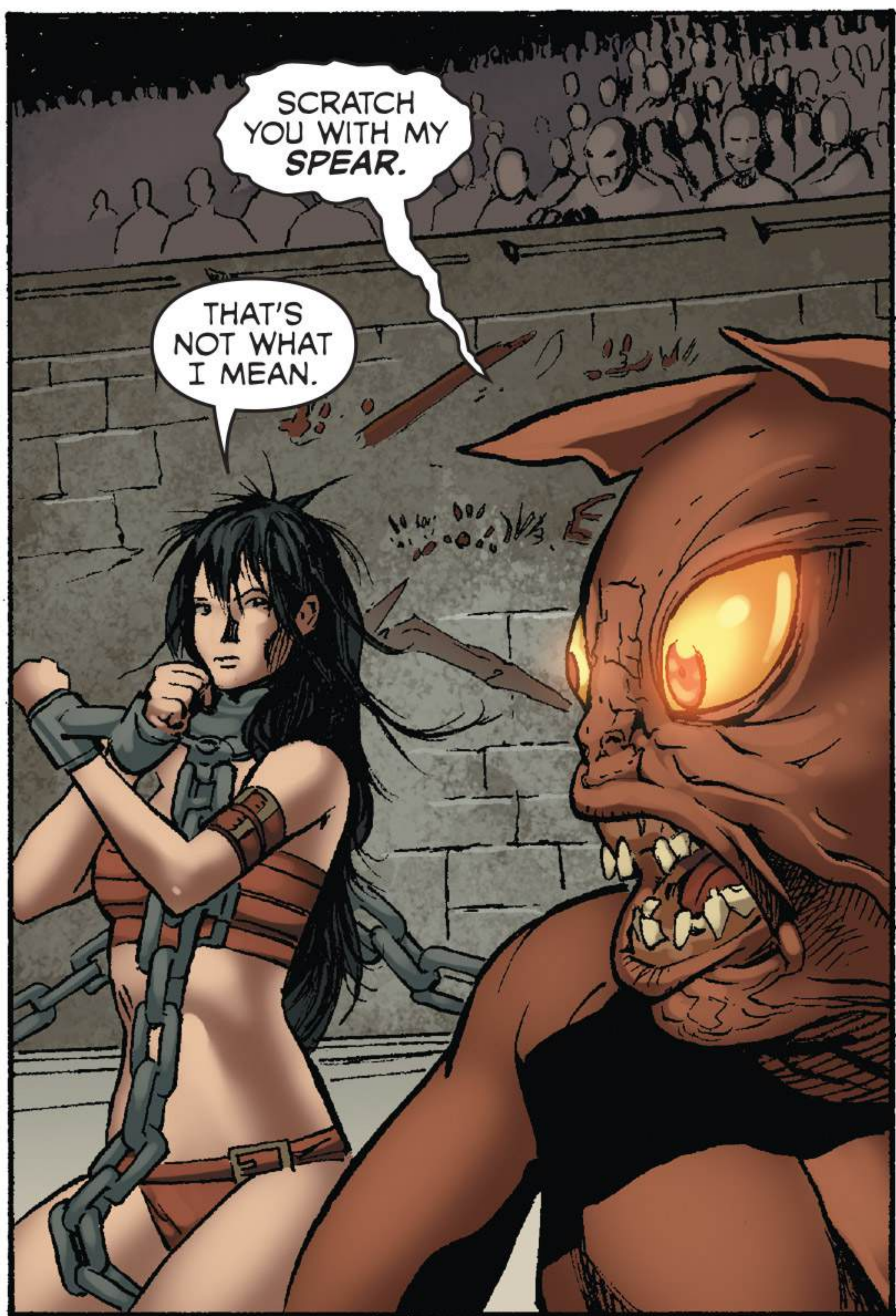
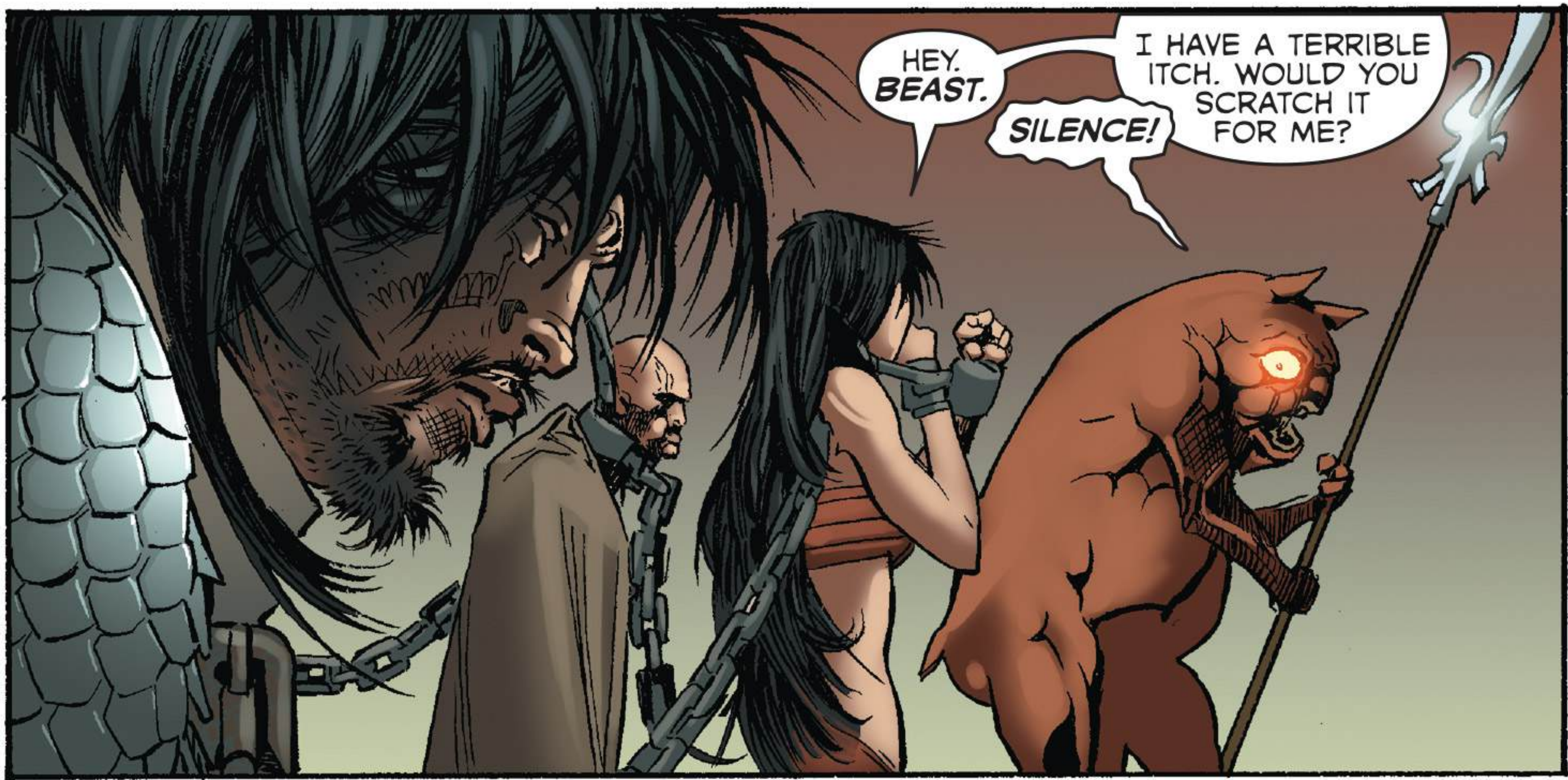
THAT MAN IS NO WEAPON. THIS IS A **MOCKERY.**

READY?

WILL THEY BRING OUT EFFIGIES FOR ALL OF US, I WONDER?

YES.





My opponent has been telling me his phony Iron Fist stories since the moment we met.

HEE-YAAA!

Was he just messing with my head? Or trying to pull a con?

YOU'RE NO IRON FIST. WHY DID YOU LIE TO ME?

I WOULD HAVE HELPED YOU ANYWAY.

TAP
TAP

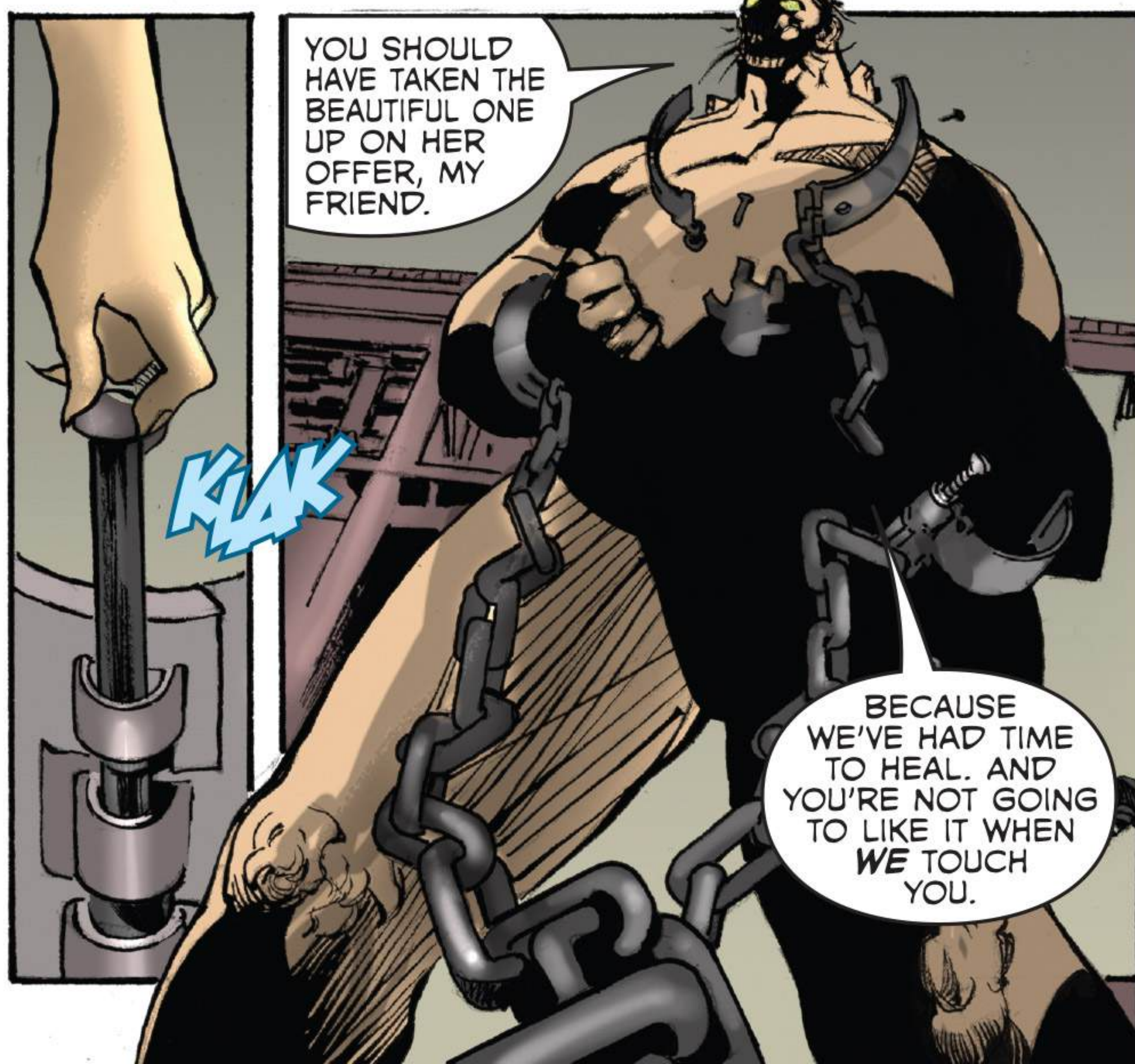
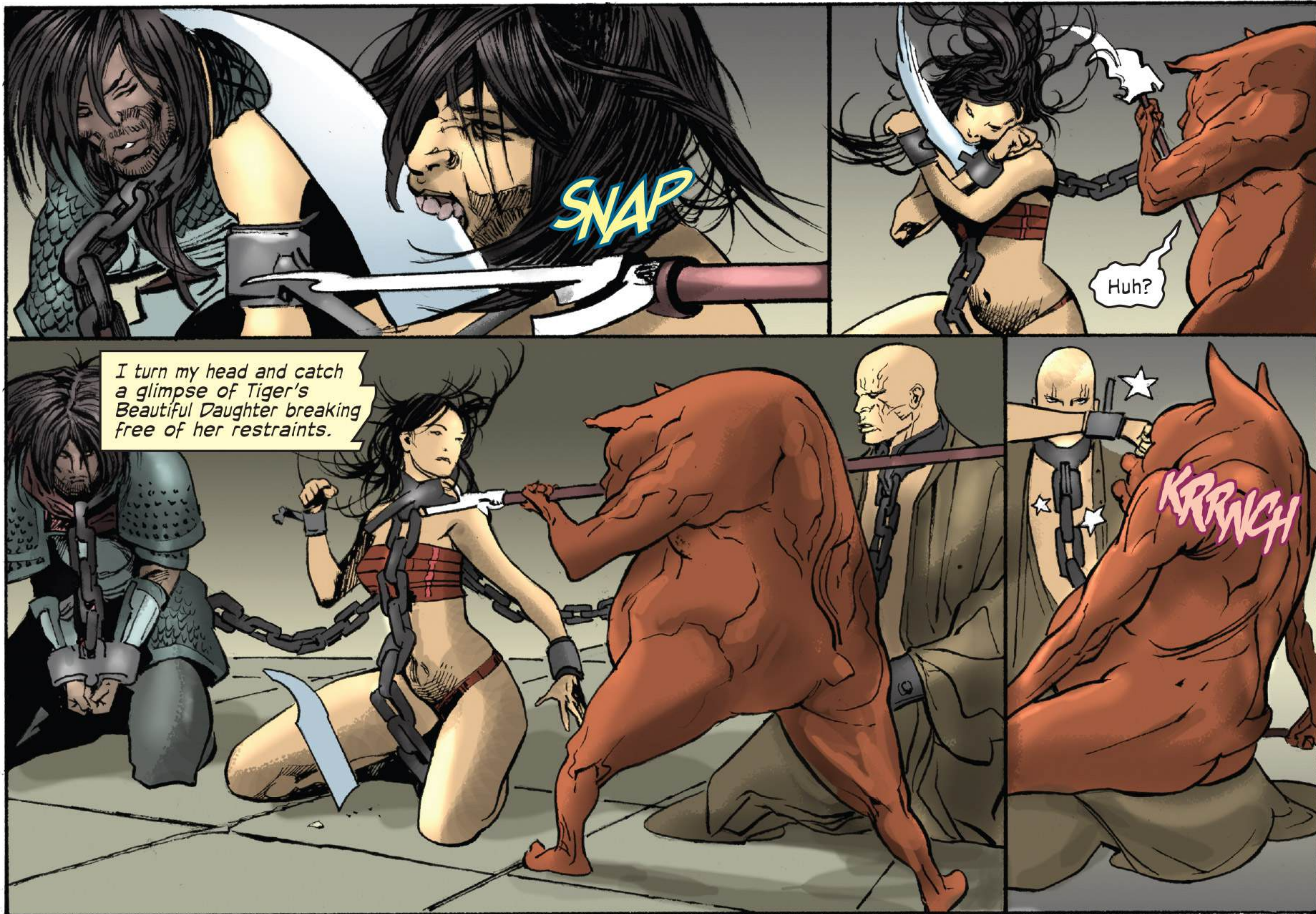
<Fool.>

ENOUGH STALLING!

FINISH THIS! DELIVER THE DEATH BLOW!

Oh, IS THAT IT? BRING ME OUT TO DO YOUR DIRTY WORK IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE?

FORGET IT. YOU WANT HIM DEAD, YOU DO IT.





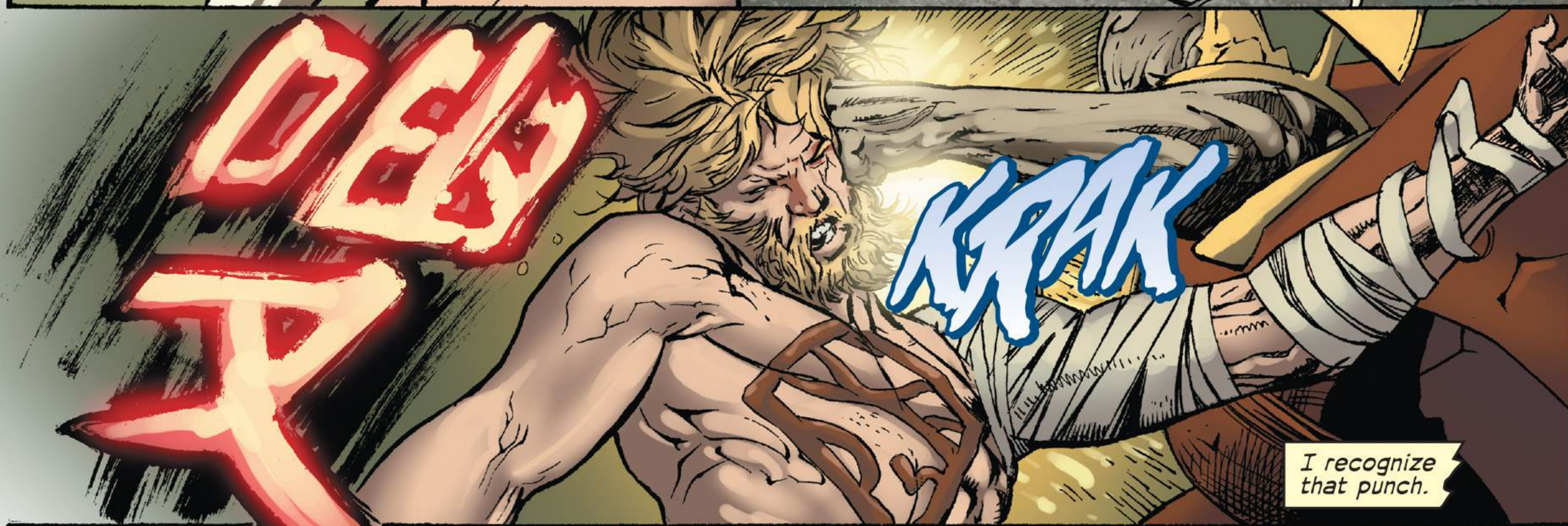
I KNOW **WHY** THE TYRANTS OF K'UN-LUN SENT YOU HERE.



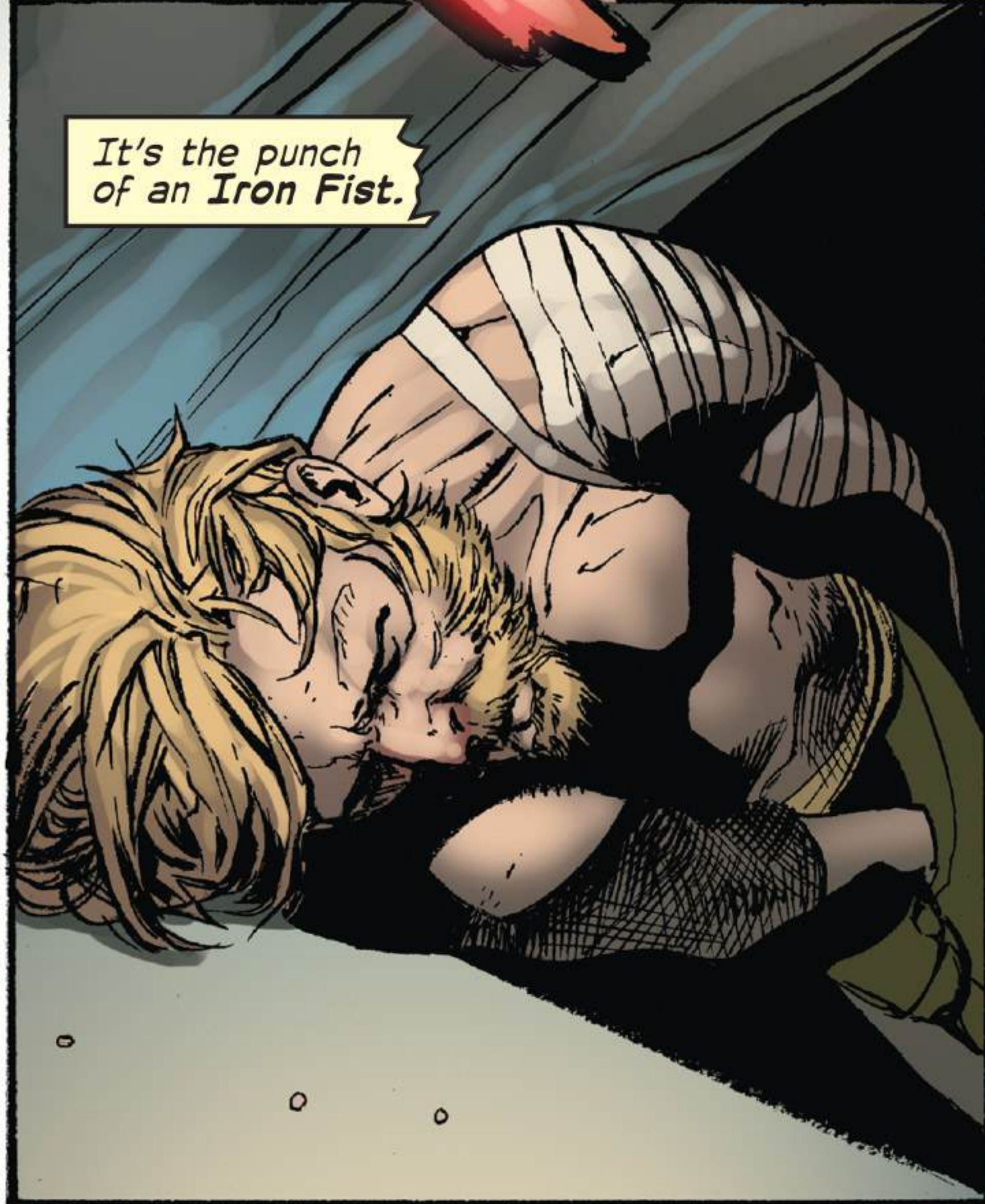
THEN YOU KNOW I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE UP. NOT WHILE THERE ARE **INNOCENT PEOPLE** SUFFERING HERE.



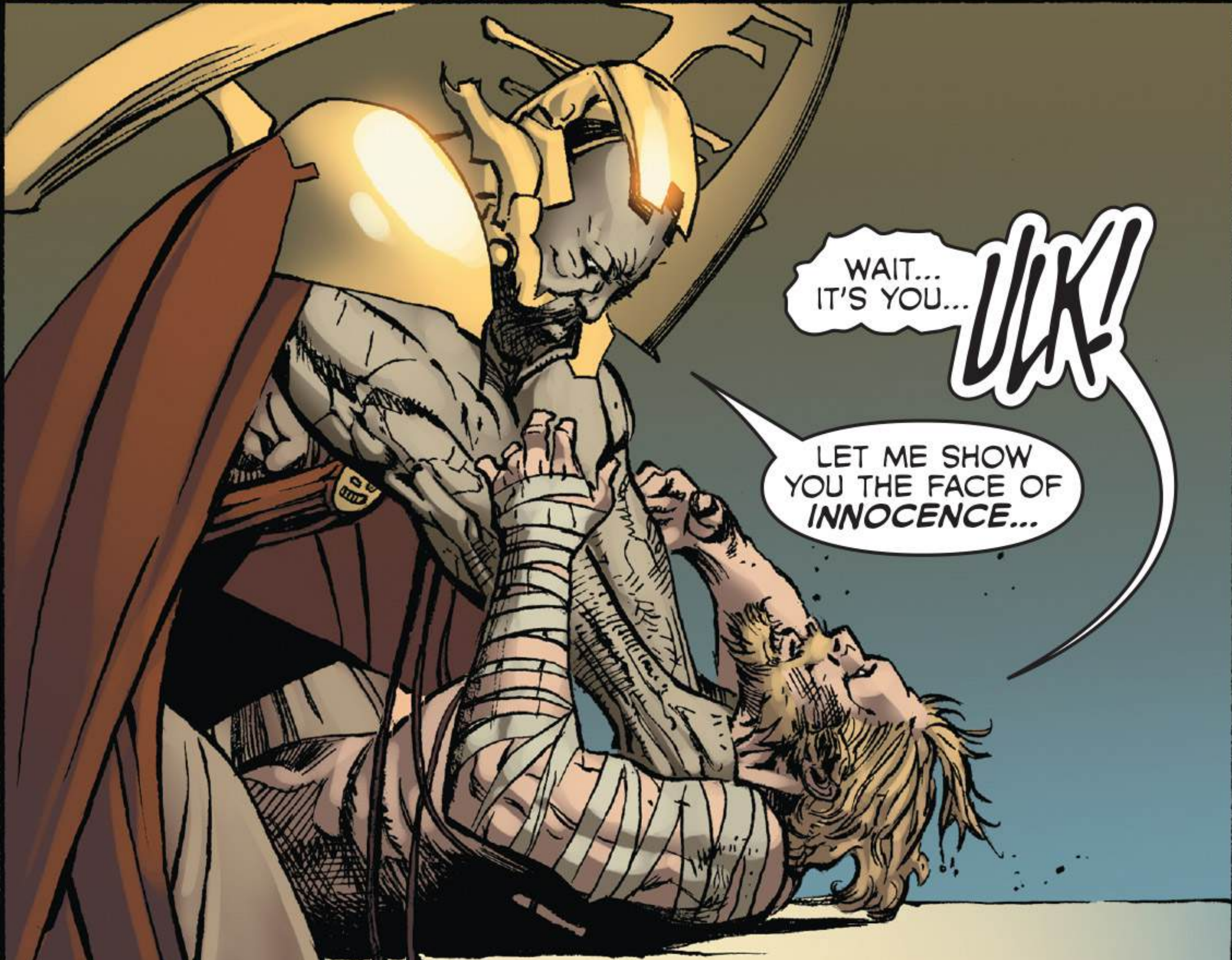
INNOCENT?!



I recognize that punch.



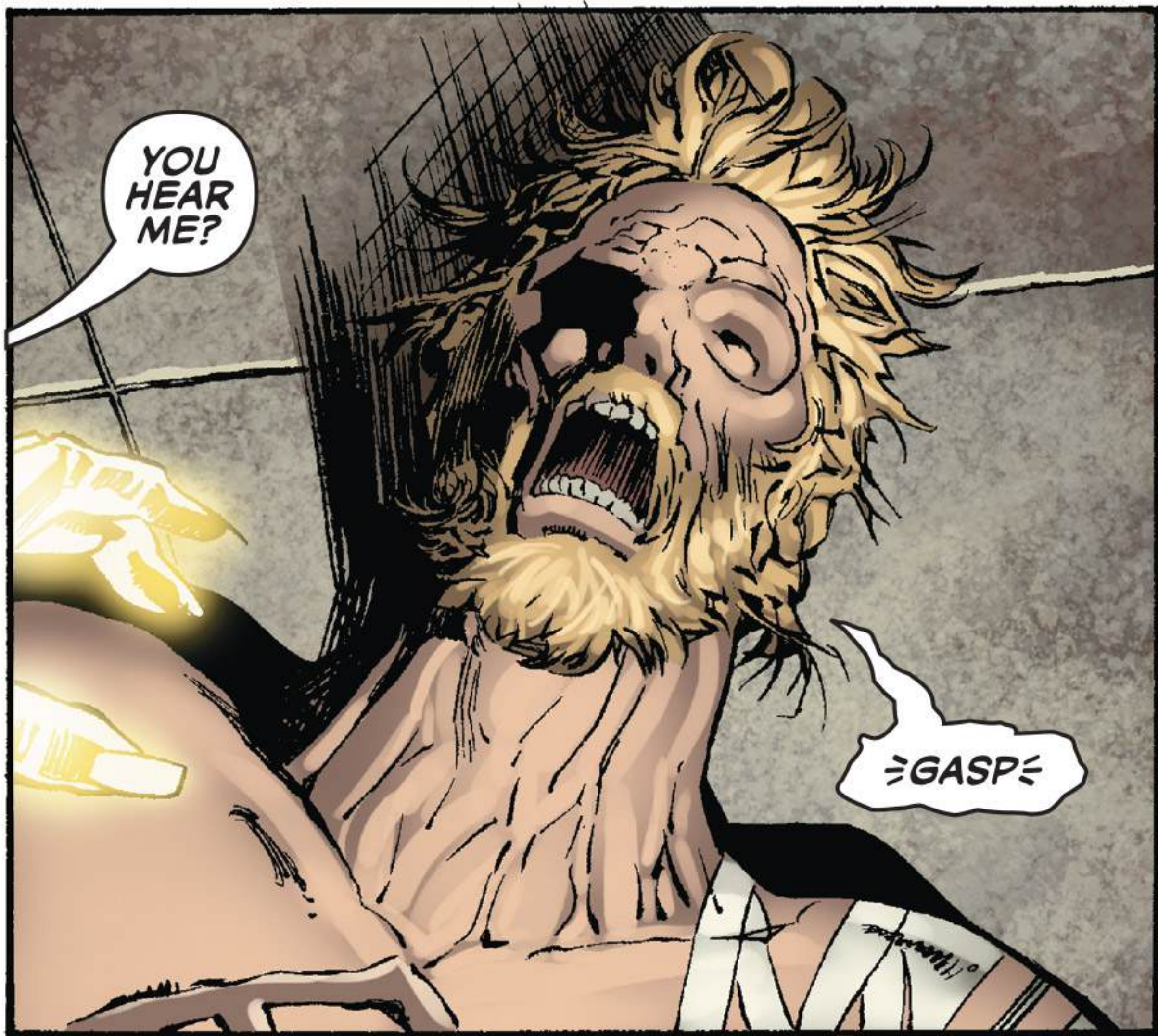
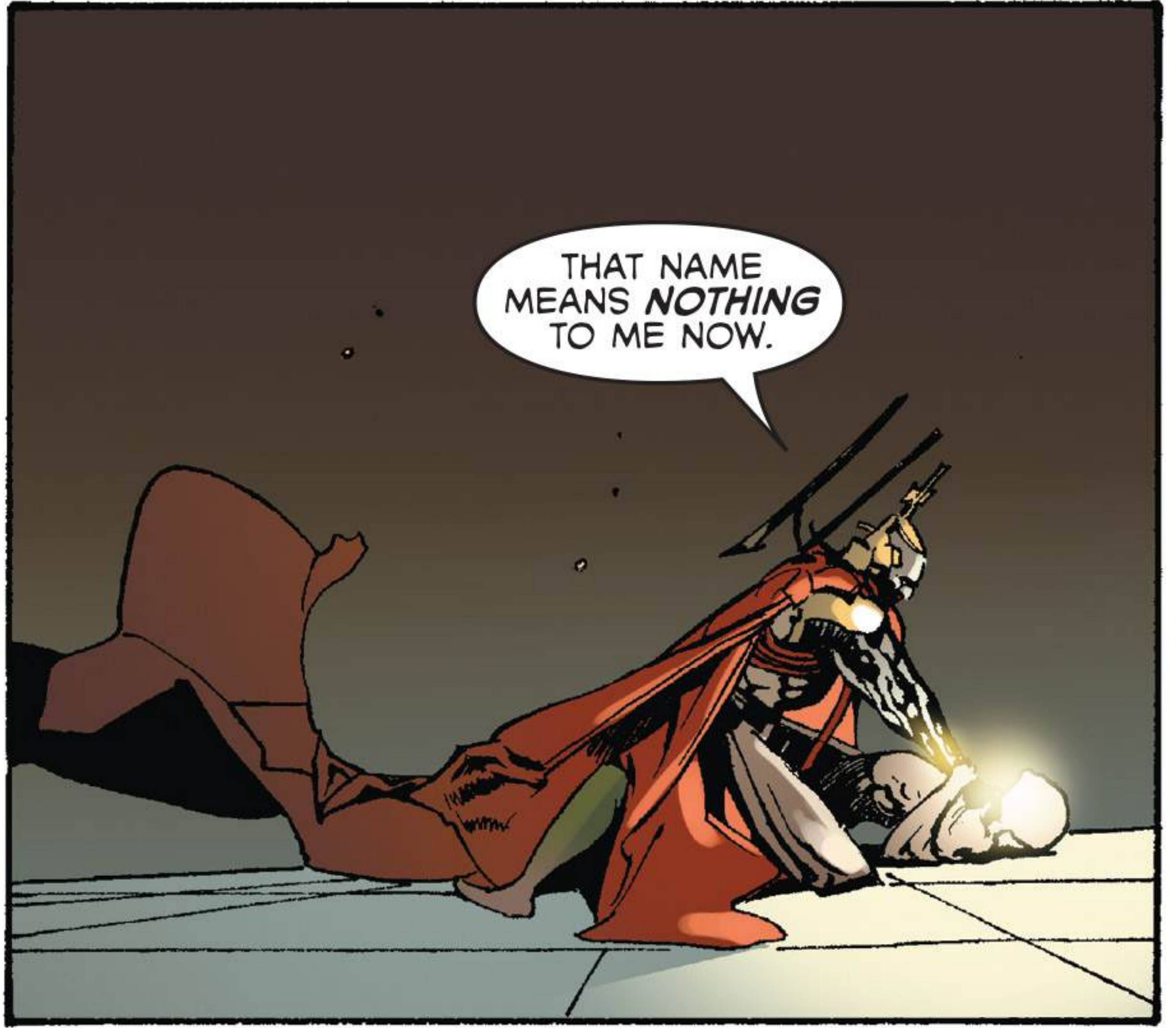
It's the punch of an Iron Fist.



WAIT... IT'S YOU...

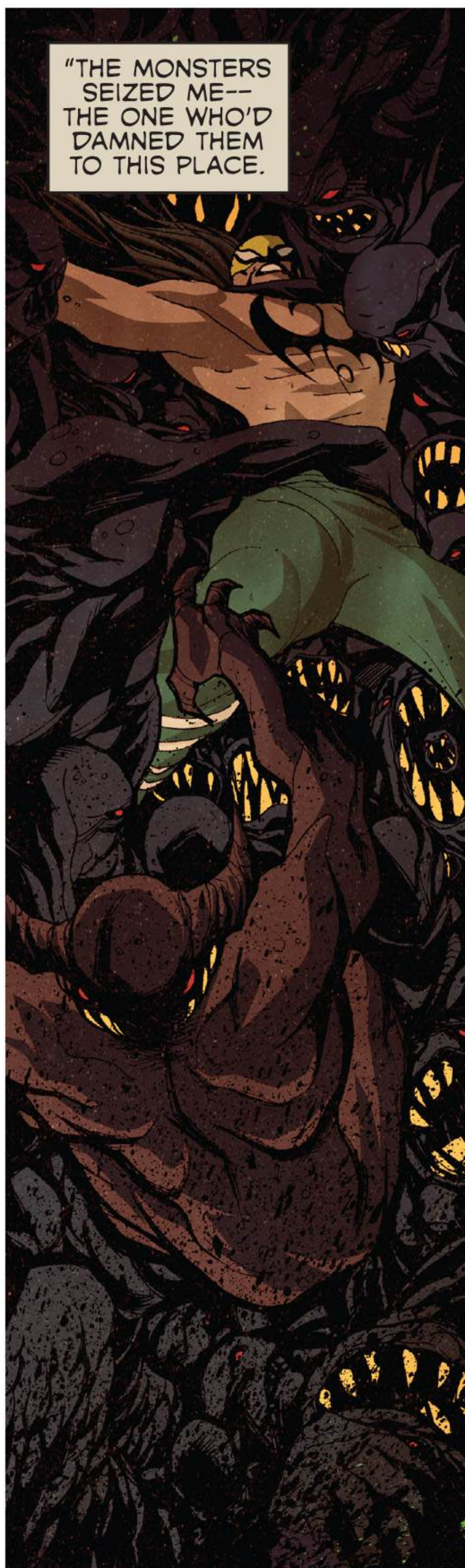
Urk!

LET ME SHOW YOU THE FACE OF **INNOCENCE...**





"SO BEGAN
MY NEW LIFE
IN THIS HELL.



"THE MONSTERS
SEIZED ME--
THE ONE WHO'D
DAMNED THEM
TO THIS PLACE.



"THEIR TORMENTS
WERE CRUEL AND
NEVER-ENDING.



"I WAS THEIR
PLAYTHING.



"BUT I KNEW MY ACTIONS
HAD NOT BEEN IN VAIN. K'UN-
LUN WAS FREE FROM EVIL.



"WHEN THEY SAW THAT I COULD WITHSTAND THEIR PHYSICAL TORMENTS, THEY TRIED ATTACKING MY MIND."

"SO I ACCEPTED MY SUFFERING GLADLY."

"BETTER THAT I TAKE THIS PAIN RATHER THAN THE *INNOCENTS* OF MY BELOVED CITY."

WE'VE RECEIVED REPORTS FROM K'UN-LUN.



...SPARE ME YOUR... LIES...

YOUR MOTHER MISSES YOU. SHE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WHERE YOU ARE.



MY MOTHER IS ENJOYING THE BLESSINGS OF A FREE K'UN-LUN...UNLIKE YOU.

THEY HAVEN'T TOLD HER ABOUT YOU. *NO ONE* IN K'UN-LUN KNOWS WHAT YOU DID.



ITS LEADERS HAVE TAKEN CREDIT FOR *YOUR* ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

THEY HAVE CONVENIENTLY BURIED THEIR CHAMPION.



DO THESE LIES GIVE YOU COMFORT? YOU HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT TRANSPIRES IN K'UN-LUN.

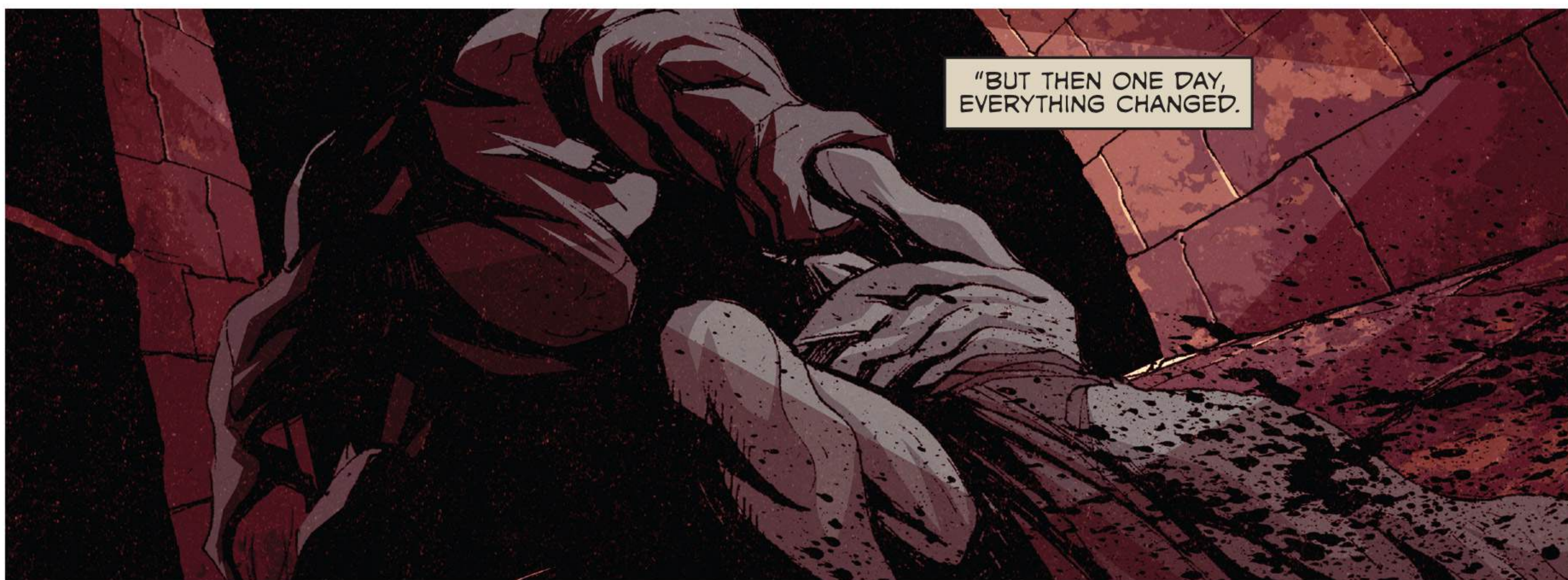


IS THAT SO?



"OVER THE CENTURIES OF MY IMPRISONMENT, CHANGMING WOULD CONTINUE TO PLY ME WITH THESE OBVIOUSLY FABRICATED UPDATES OF MY MOTHER IN K'UN-LUN.

"HOW CRUSHED SHE WAS THAT I NEVER RETURNED. HOW I'D LEFT HER A LONELY WIDOW. HOW SHE TURNED TO THE DARK ARTS HERSELF...



"BUT THEN ONE DAY, EVERYTHING CHANGED.



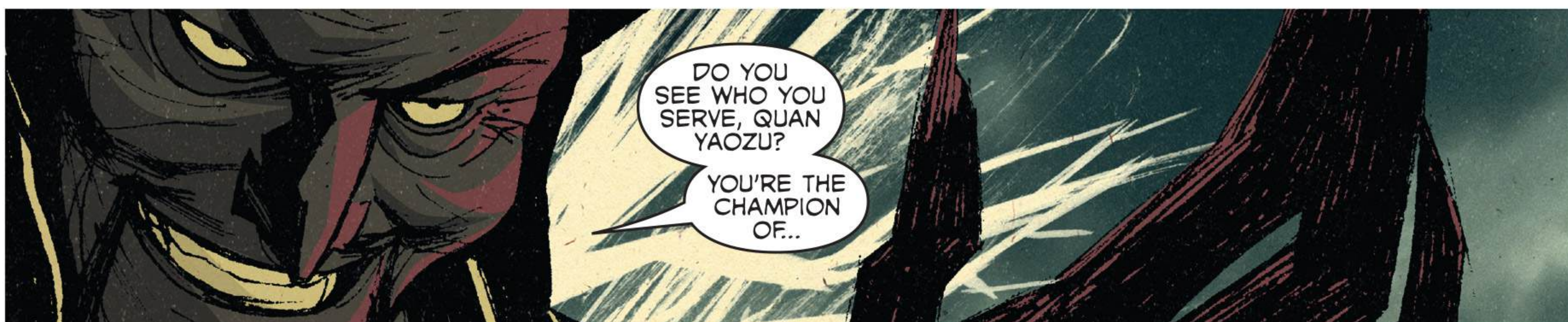
"I SAW A FACE FROM MY YOUTH. A GIRL WHO LIVED DOWN THE PATH FROM WHERE I WAS RAISED.

"SHE COULDN'T BE HERE. NOT HERE. NOT FROM MY BELOVED K'UN-LUN...



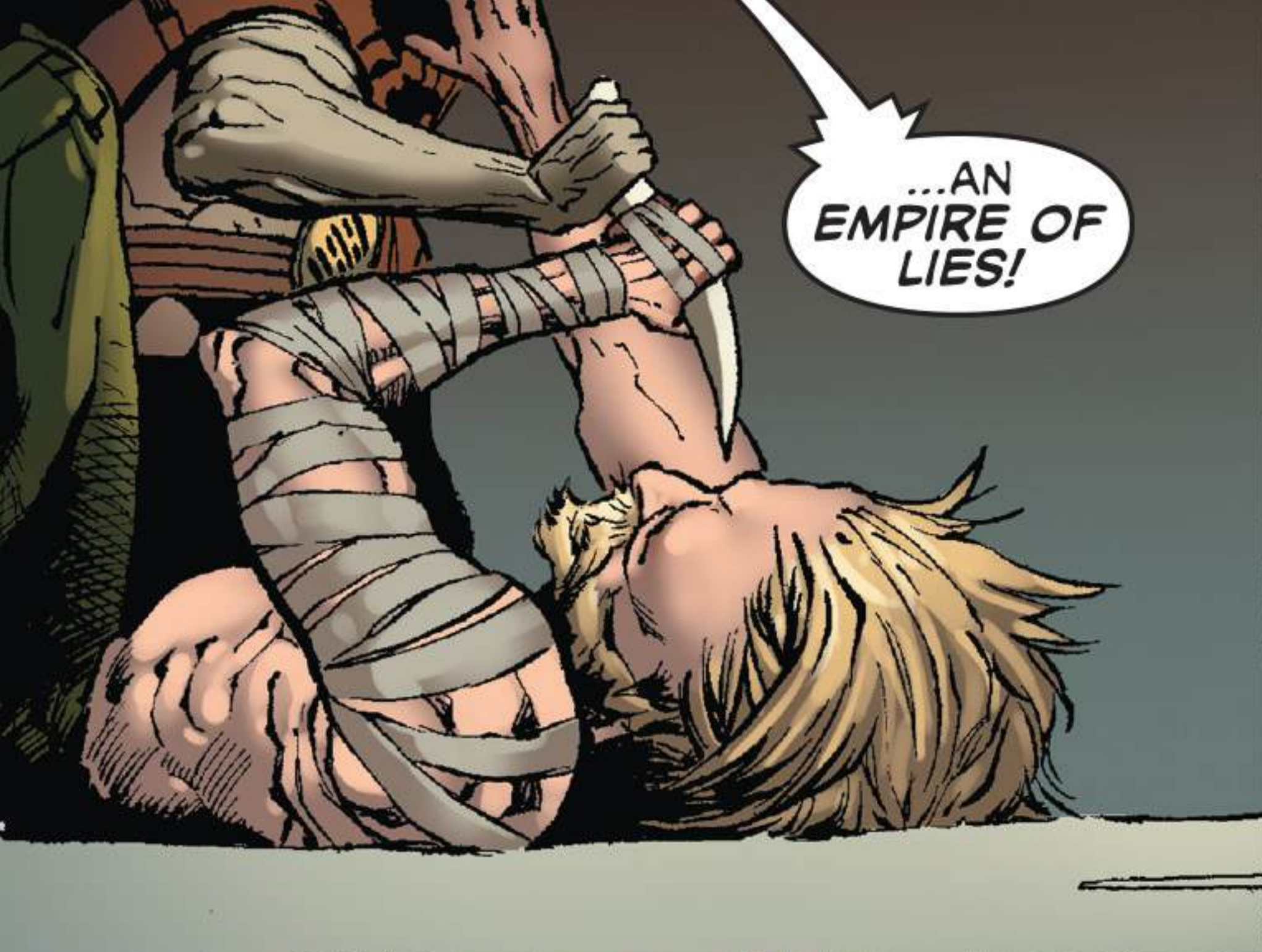
"I DID NOT UNDERSTAND... WE HAD SEALED THE GATE...

"NO ONE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO ENTER, OR LEAVE!"



DO YOU SEE WHO YOU SERVE, QUAN YAOZU?

YOU'RE THE CHAMPION OF...



...AN
EMPIRE OF
LIES!



...STOP...WE CAN
TALK ABOUT THIS...



CHANG-
MING...



Heaven's Haymaker.

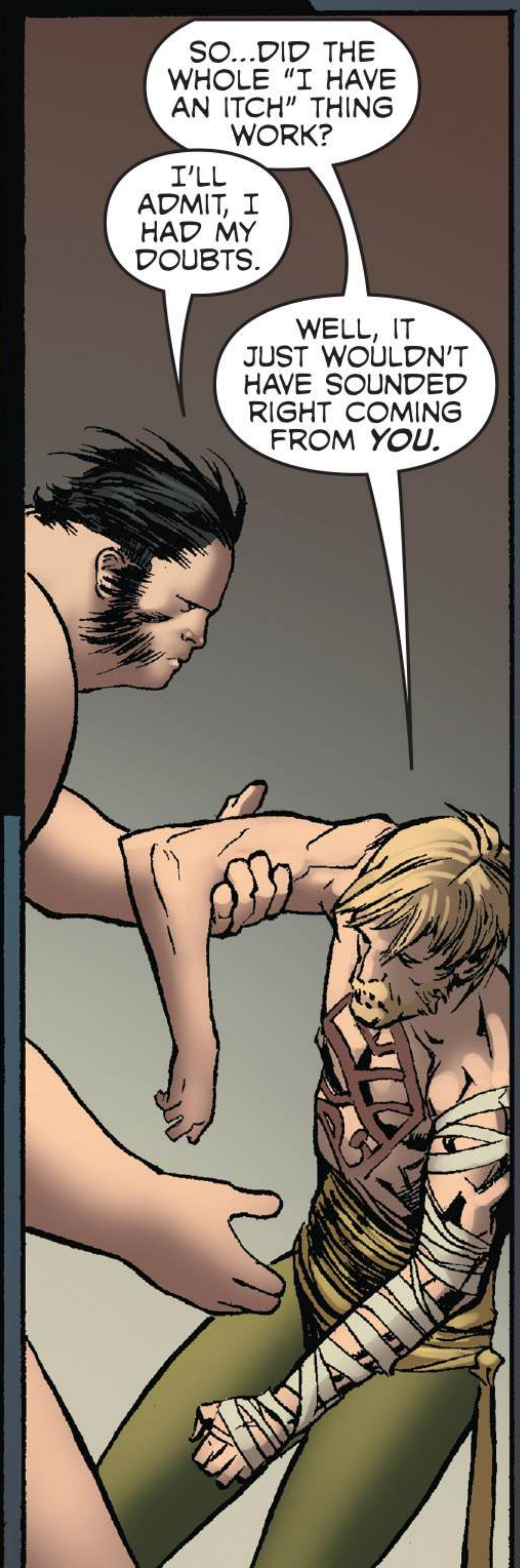
...ENOUGH!



HOW
DARE YOU
TOUCH
ME--



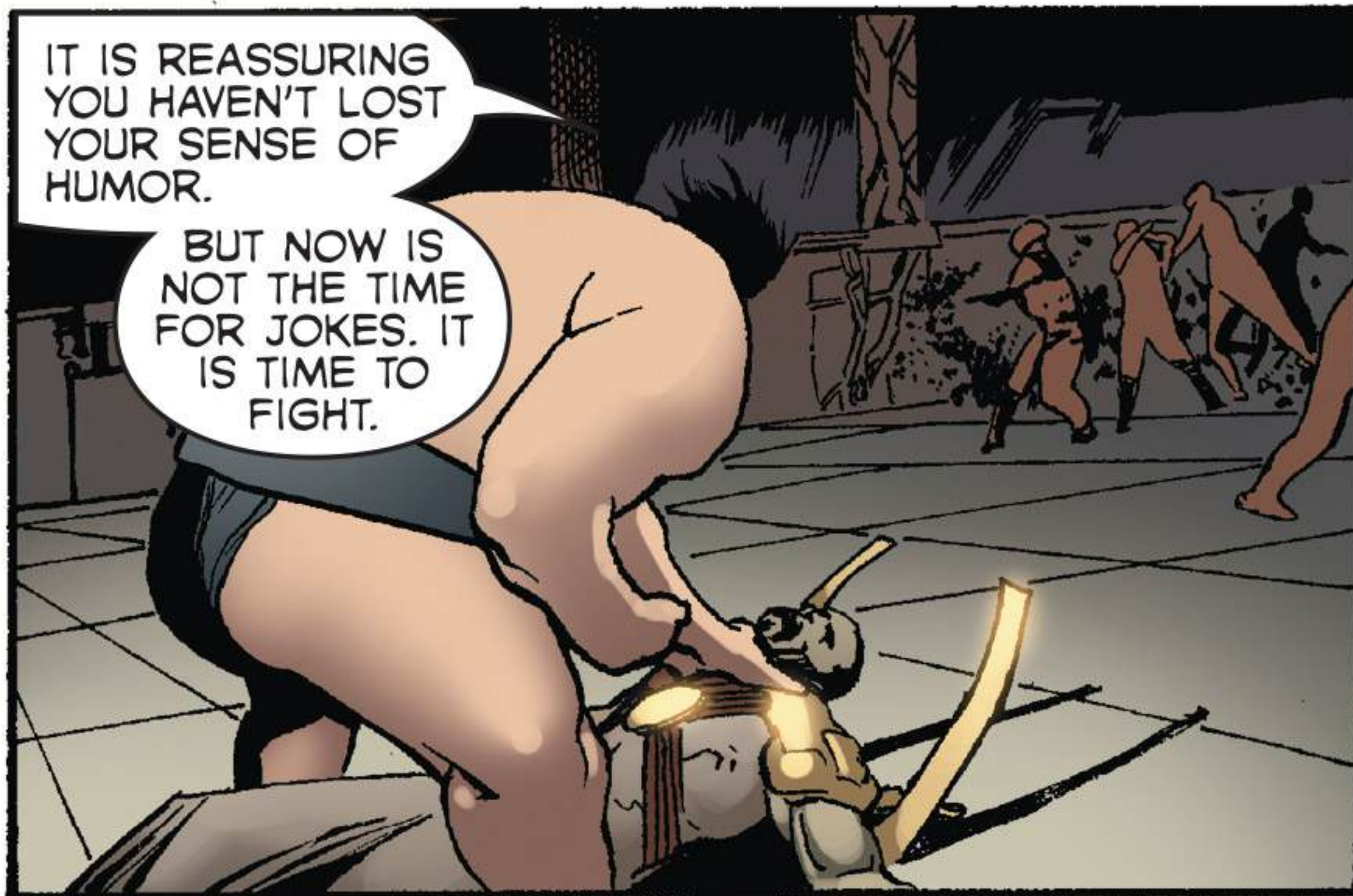
Thunder Devil Stomp.



SO...DID THE
WHOLE "I HAVE
AN ITCH" THING
WORK?

I'LL
ADMIT, I
HAD MY
DOUBTS.

WELL, IT
JUST WOULDN'T
HAVE SOUNDED
RIGHT COMING
FROM YOU.

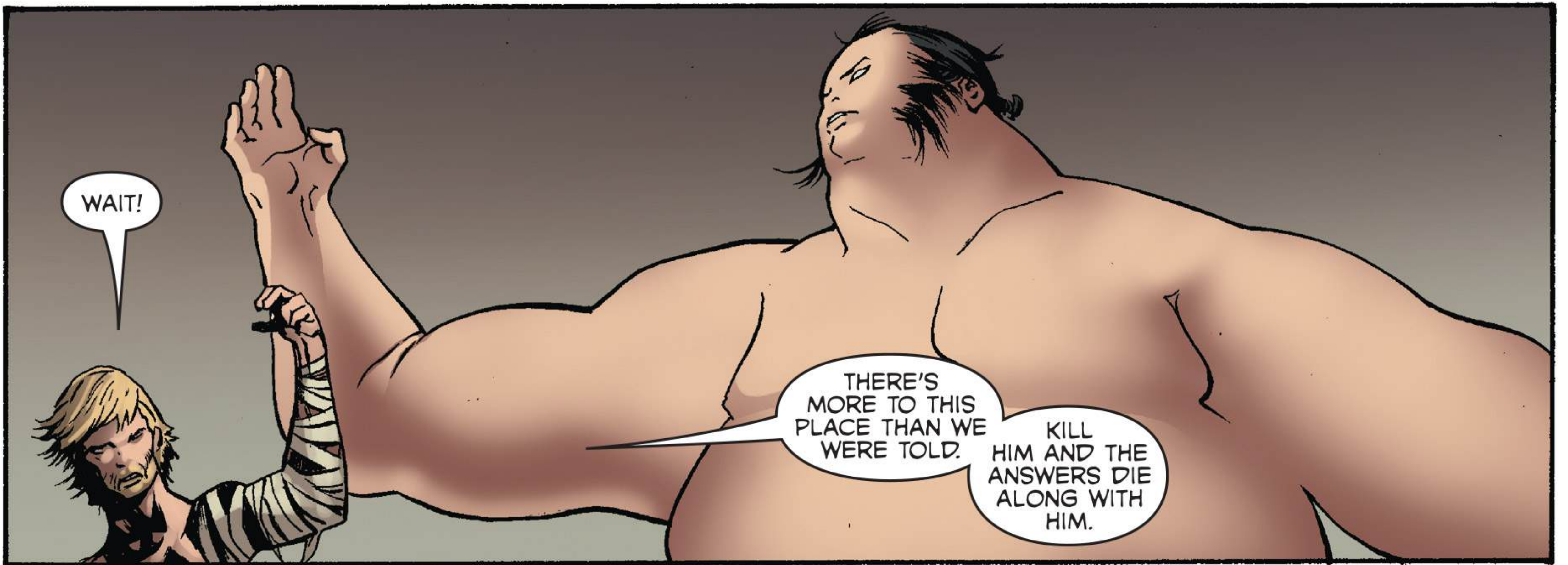


IT IS REASSURING
YOU HAVEN'T LOST
YOUR SENSE OF
HUMOR.

BUT NOW IS
NOT THE TIME
FOR JOKES. IT
IS TIME TO
FIGHT.



AND
PUNISH OUR
TORMENTORS.



WAIT!

THERE'S
MORE TO THIS
PLACE THAN WE
WERE TOLD.

KILL
HIM AND THE
ANSWERS DIE
ALONG WITH
HIM.



HE'S TOO
DANGEROUS TO
BE ALLOWED
TO LIVE.

THIS WAS
PART OF THE
PLAN. REMOVE
THE LEADER,
SEIZE CONTROL
OF THE CITY...



COBRA,
I'M ASKING
YOU TO TRUST
ME ON THIS.

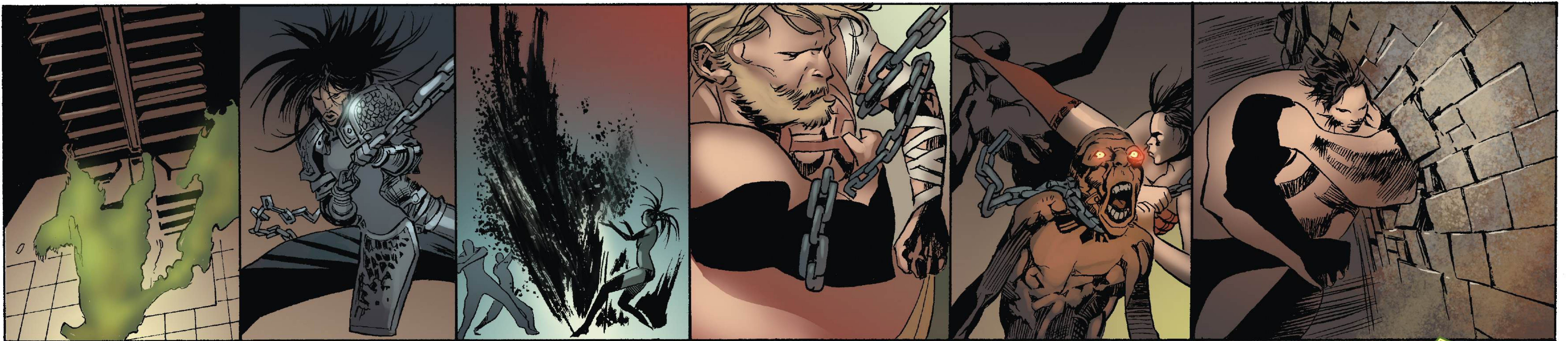


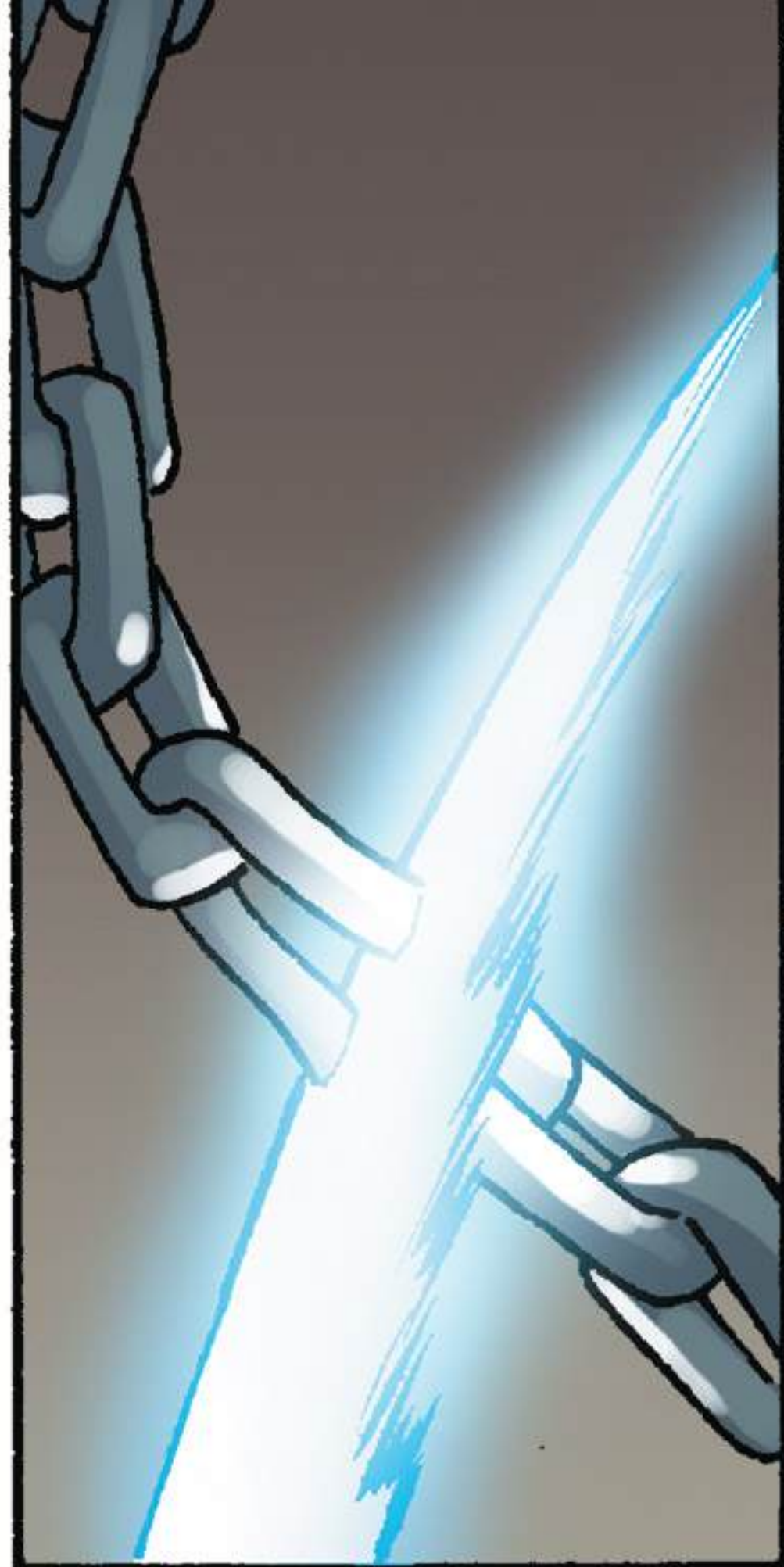
HIS ACTIONS
ARE ON YOUR
HEAD, THEN.



AGREED.







THE WEAPONS HAVE FREED THE PRISONERS.

AND A SPY BATTALION IS TRACKING THEM?

YES, SIRE. ALL OVER THE FRINGES OF THE CITY.

REMEMBER: NOT A SINGLE WEAPON IS TO BE HARMED. FIGHT ENOUGH TO MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE A *HOLLOW VICTORY*...

BUT WE NEED ALL OF THE WEAPONS ALIVE FOR THIS TO WORK.

UNDERSTOOD, SIRE.

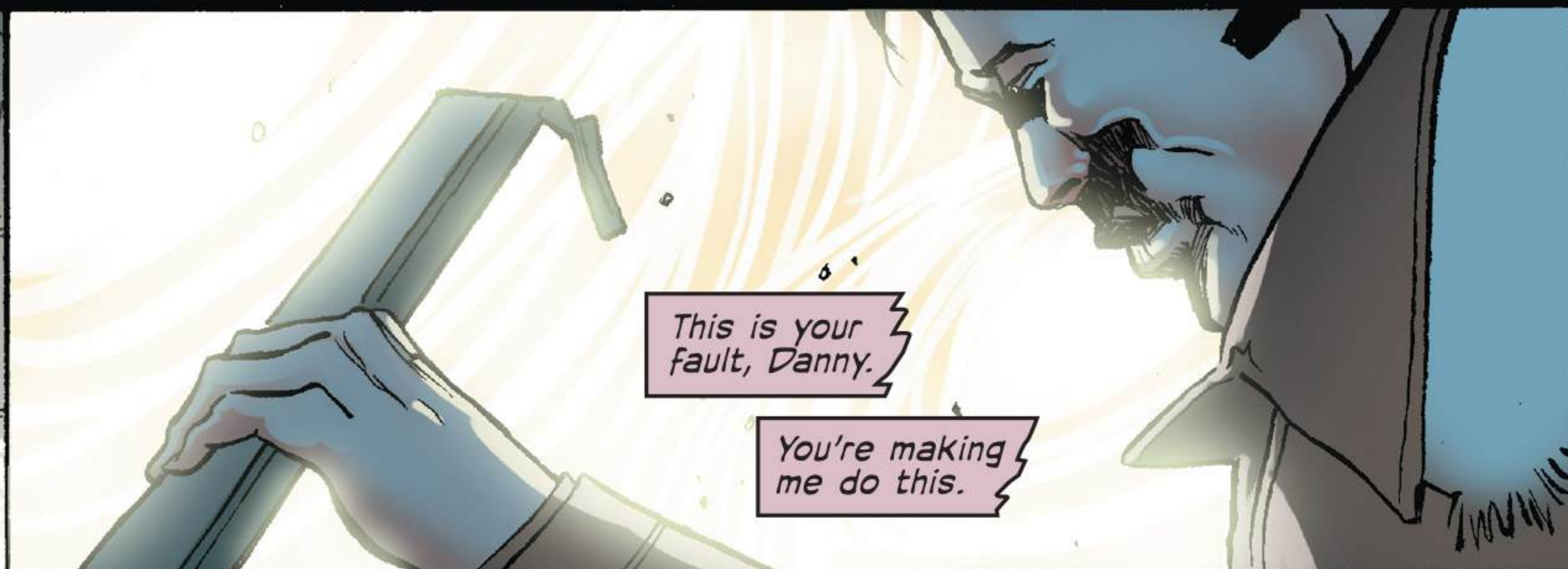
"SUMMON THE SECRET ARMY AND HAVE THEM PREPARED TO LEAVE AT ONCE."

"THEY AWAIT YOUR COMMAND, SIRE."



Earthly Gates of the Eighth City. Remotest China.

HERE, MASTER DAVOS.



This is your fault, Danny.

You're making me do this.



Father knows you too well, as do I.



Your heart is strong...



...but sometimes, you lack the stomach to do what's necessary.



NOT TOO MUCH FARTHER NOW...



GATHER YOURSELVES TOGETHER. FREEDOM IS AT HAND!

THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST

ESCAPE FROM THE EIGHTH CITY

CHAPTER THREE

鐵拳
26





K'un Lun, several months ago.

After the revolution.

AND THIS MAN?



THEY TOOK HIM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

HIS FAMILY, TOO.



THERE WAS NO TRIAL, DAVOS. NOT EVEN A DISCUSSION.

HE WAS DECLARED AN ENEMY BASED ON THE FLIMSIEST EVIDENCE AND CAST INTO THE EIGHTH CITY.

LIKE SO, SO MANY OTHERS...



NOW IS THE TIME, THEN. I WILL GO THERE AND FREE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.



NO, MY SON.

THERE IS **SOMETHING ELSE** I NEED YOU TO DO.



Now.

My name is Danny Rand. Me and my friends are trying to break out of Hell.



We traveled to this place-- the so-called Eighth City-- to free political prisoners.

But we became trapped here ourselves, and have spent what seems like an eternity fighting monsters and demons.



And now it's like every single one of them has shown up to stop us.



There is a way out of Hell.



But it is difficult, and involves meditation.

Have you ever tried meditating and doing kung fu at the same time?



It's kind of like trying to fall asleep and do brain surgery at the same time.

THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST
ESCAPE FROM THE EIGHTH CITY
CONCLUSION

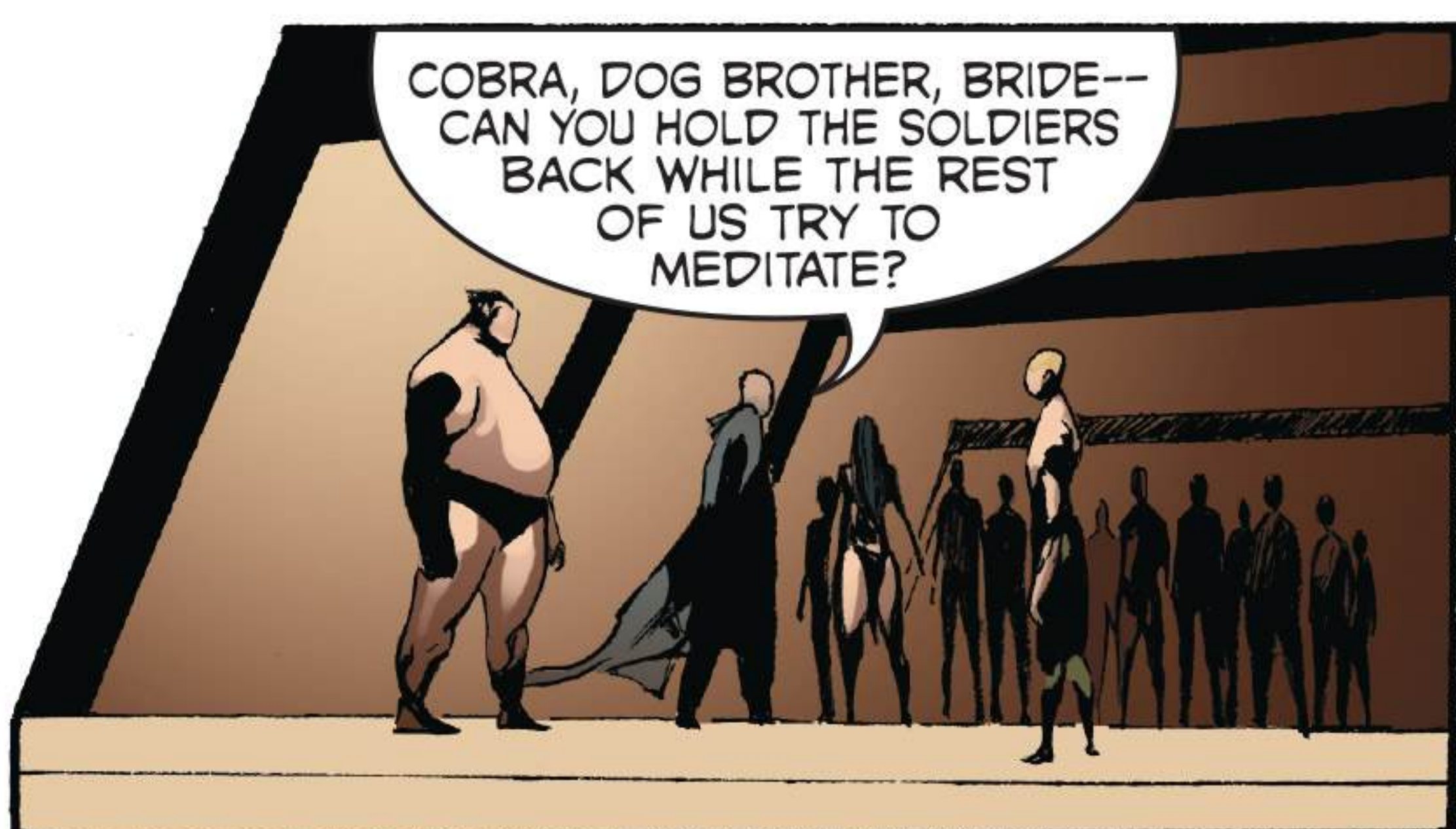


I THINK I SEE THE PLACE WHERE WE ENTERED.

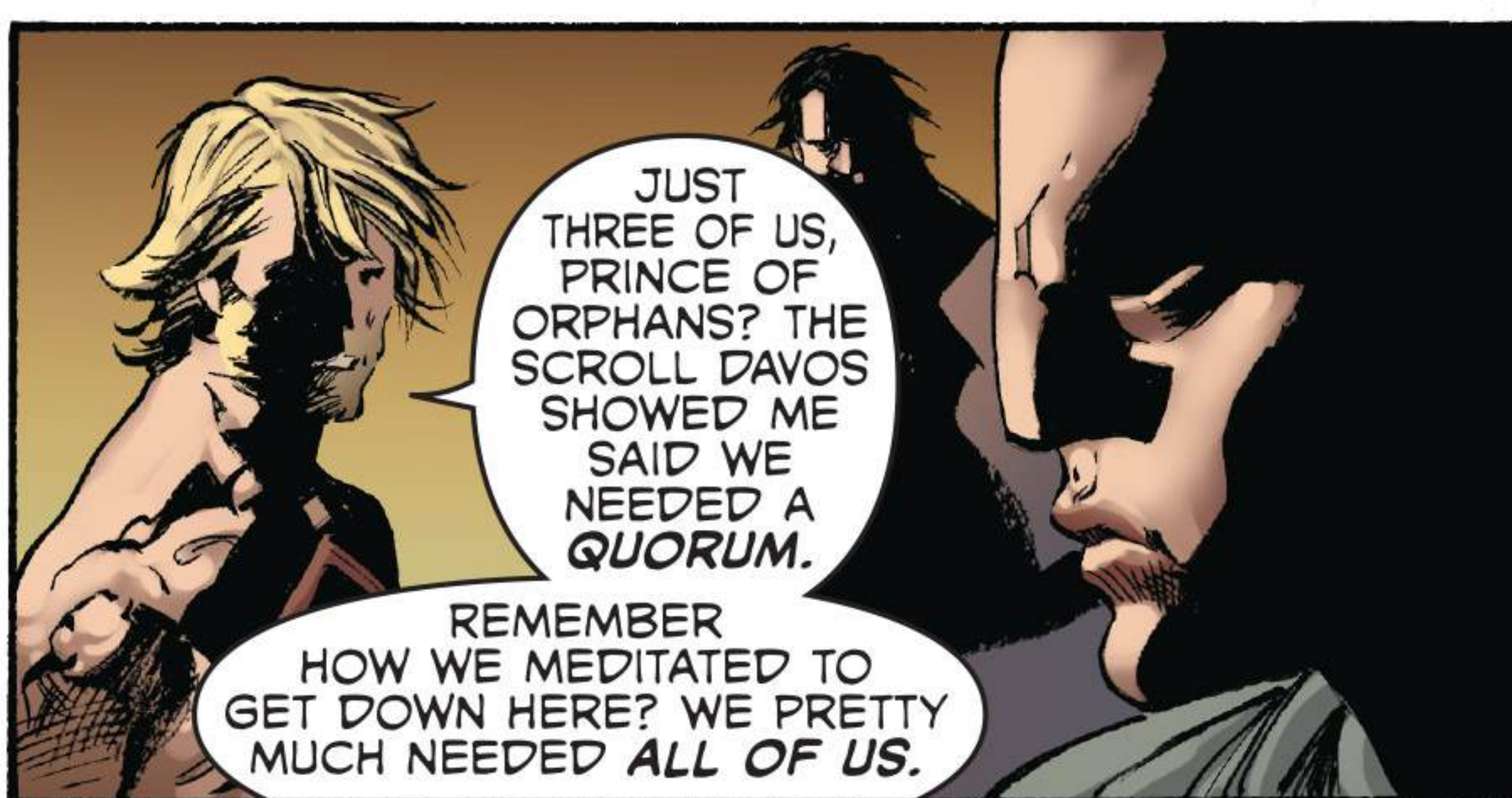
I MEAN, LANDED.



WE CAN'T
OPEN THE GATE
AND PROTECT
THE PRISONERS AT
THE SAME TIME,
SO I SUGGEST
WE DIVIDE OUR
STRENGTH.

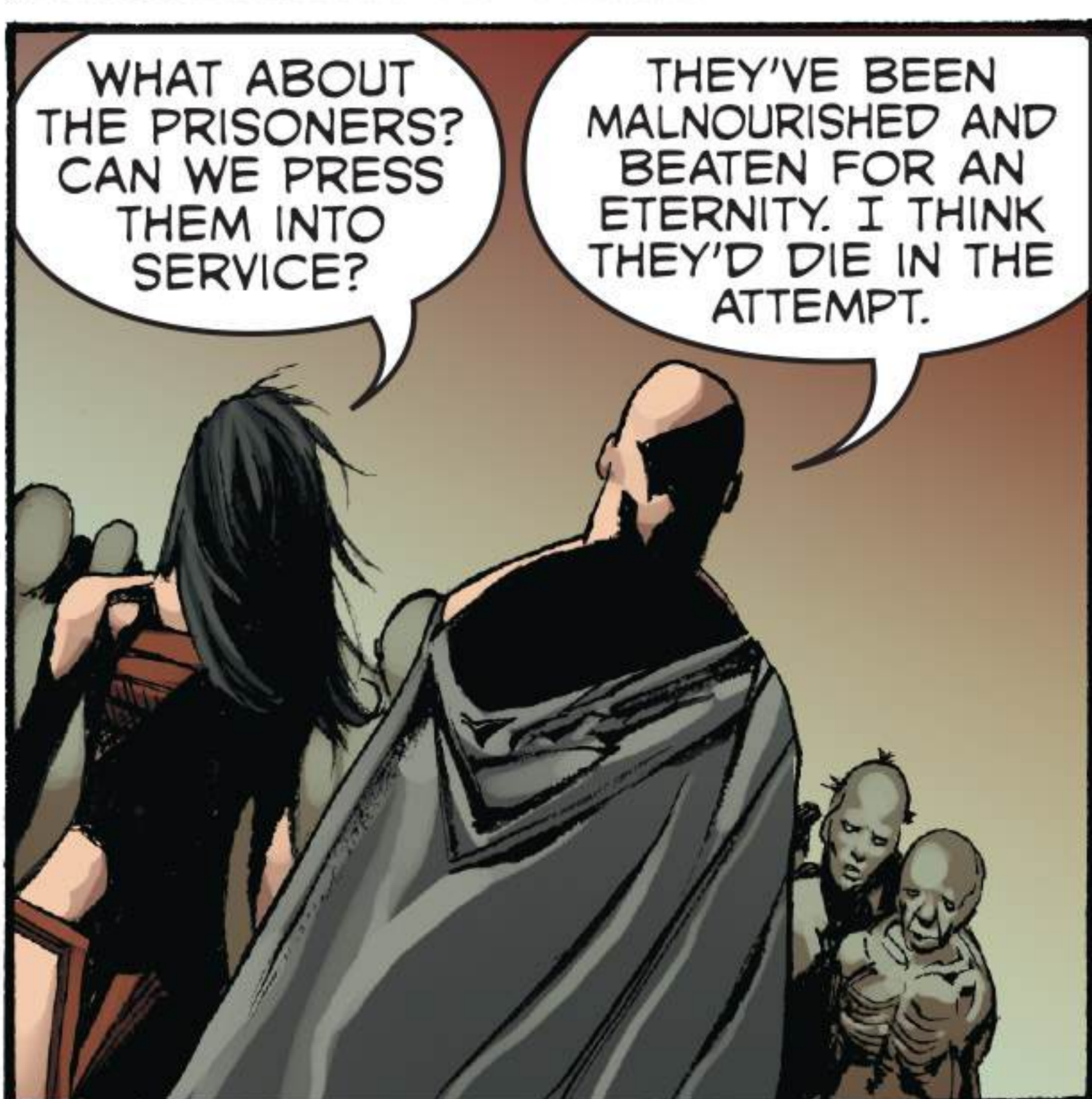


COBRA, DOG BROTHER, BRIDE--
CAN YOU HOLD THE SOLDIERS
BACK WHILE THE REST
OF US TRY TO
MEDITATE?



JUST
THREE OF US,
PRINCE OF
ORPHANS? THE
SCROLL DAVOS
SHOWED ME
SAID WE
NEEDED A
QUORUM.

REMEMBER
HOW WE MEDITATED TO
GET DOWN HERE? WE PRETTY
MUCH NEEDED **ALL OF US**.



WHAT ABOUT
THE PRISONERS?
CAN WE PRESS
THEM INTO
SERVICE?

THEY'VE BEEN
MALNOURISHED AND
BEATEN FOR AN
ETERNITY. I THINK
THEY'D DIE IN THE
ATTEMPT.

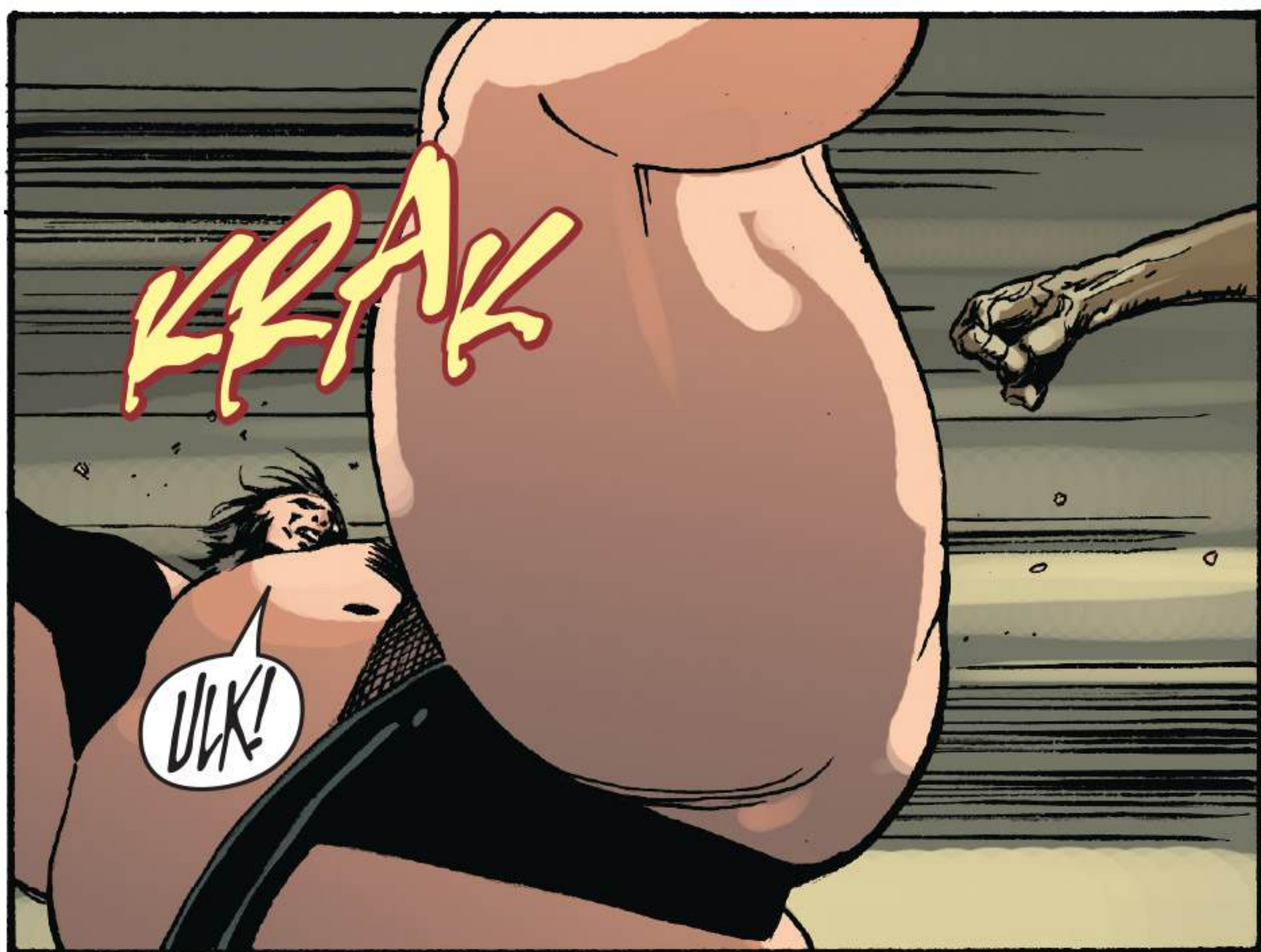
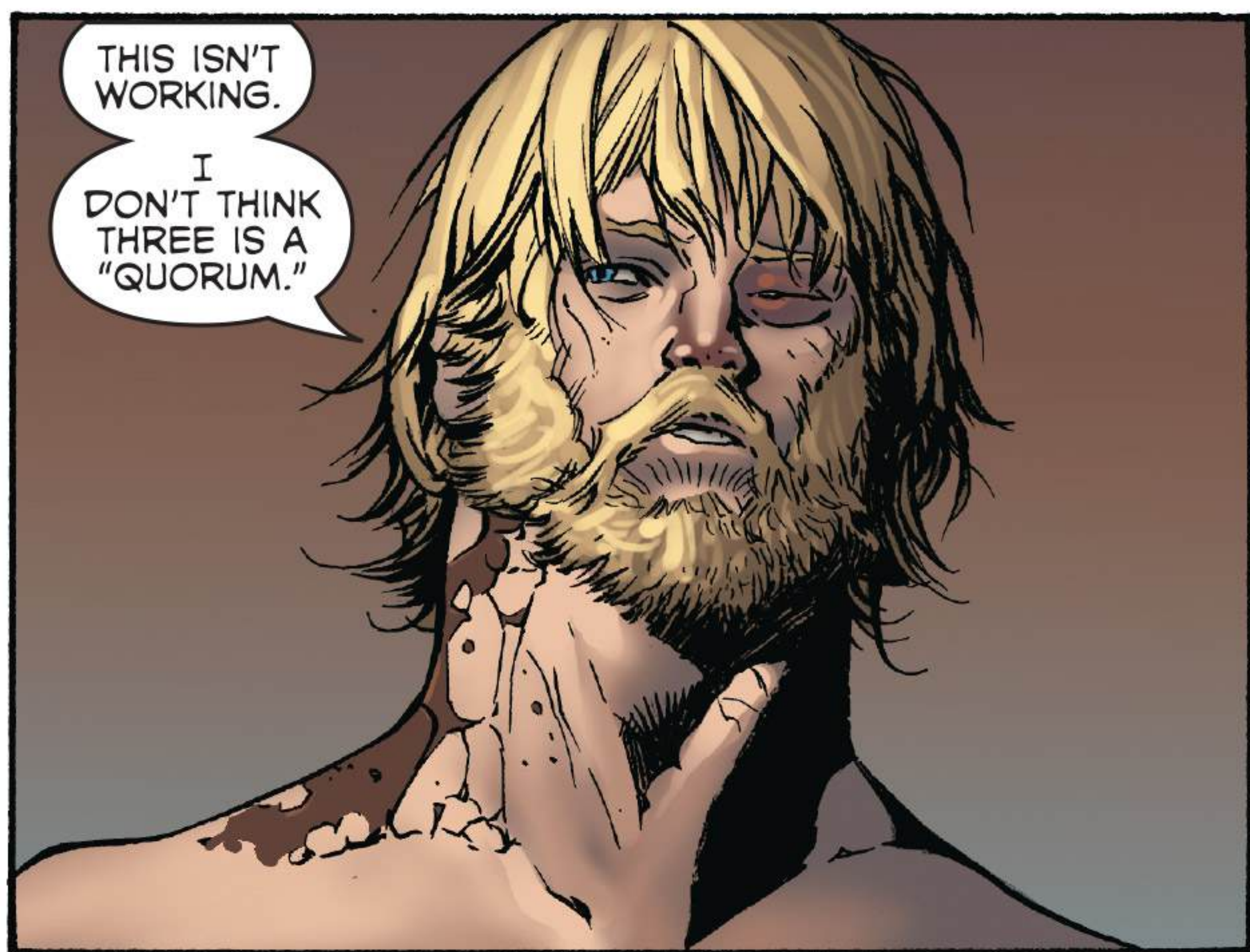


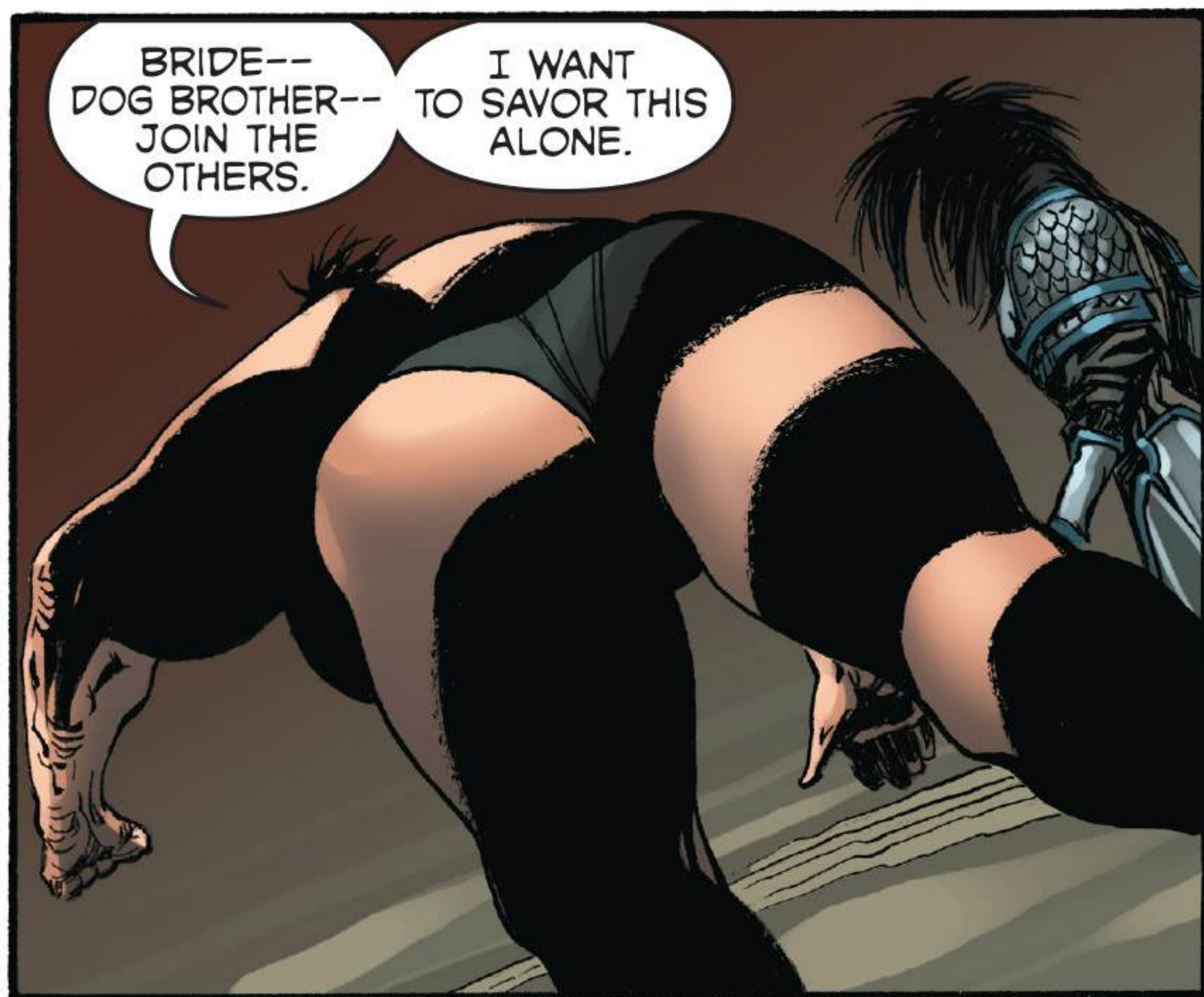
AND THEN
WHAT WOULD
BE THE POINT
OF THIS?
CRAP!



LET'S SPLIT
UP AND TRY IT
THE PRINCE OF
ORPHANS'
WAY.

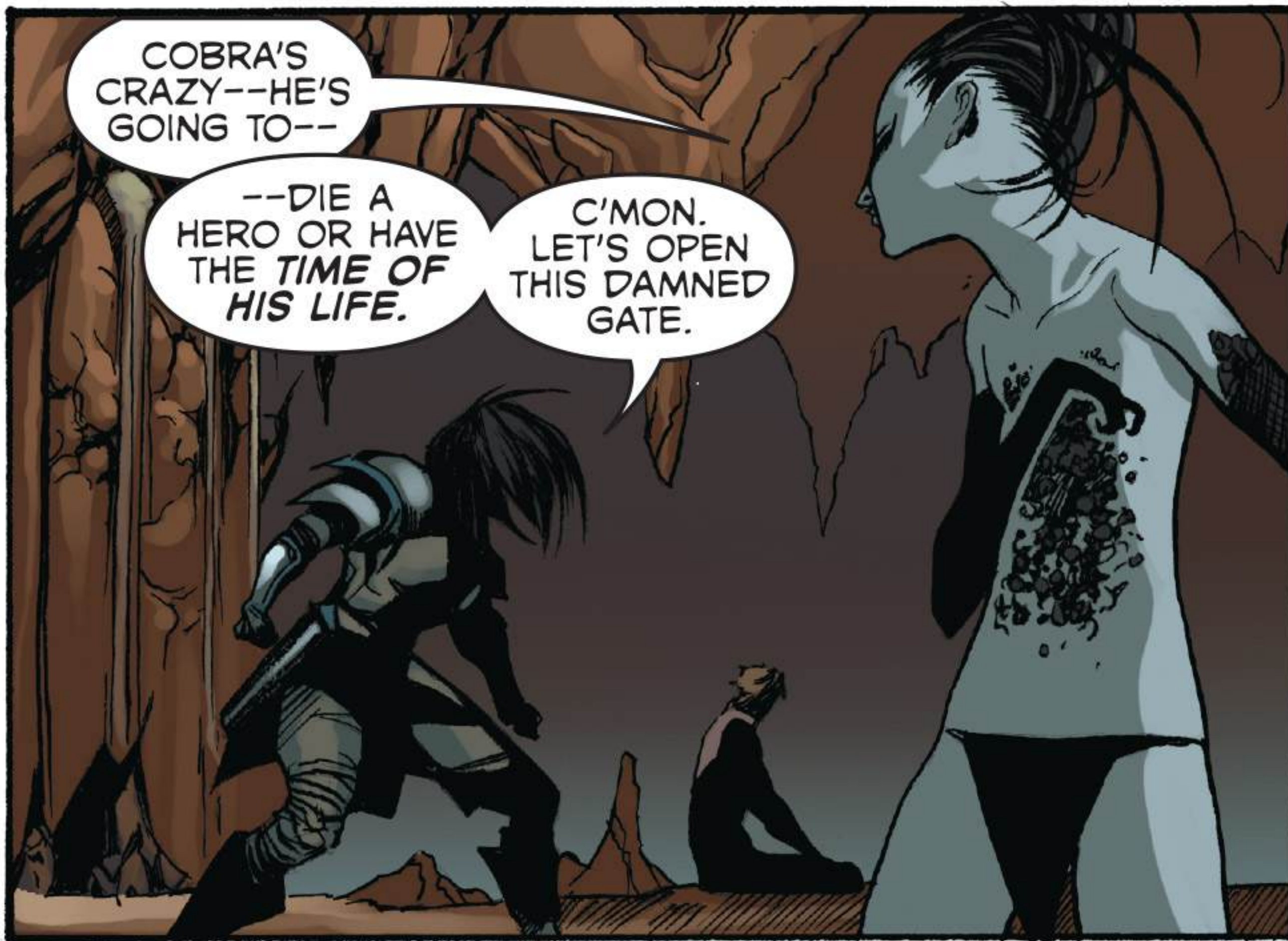
AND
HURRY...





BRIDE--
DOG BROTHER--
JOIN THE
OTHERS.

I WANT
TO SAVOR THIS
ALONE.



COBRA'S
CRAZY--HE'S
GOING TO--

--DIE A
HERO OR HAVE
THE *TIME OF*
HIS LIFE.

C'MON.
LET'S OPEN
THIS DAMNED
GATE.



I SHALL
THINK ABOUT
YOUR CRUSHED
SPINES AND
FACES...



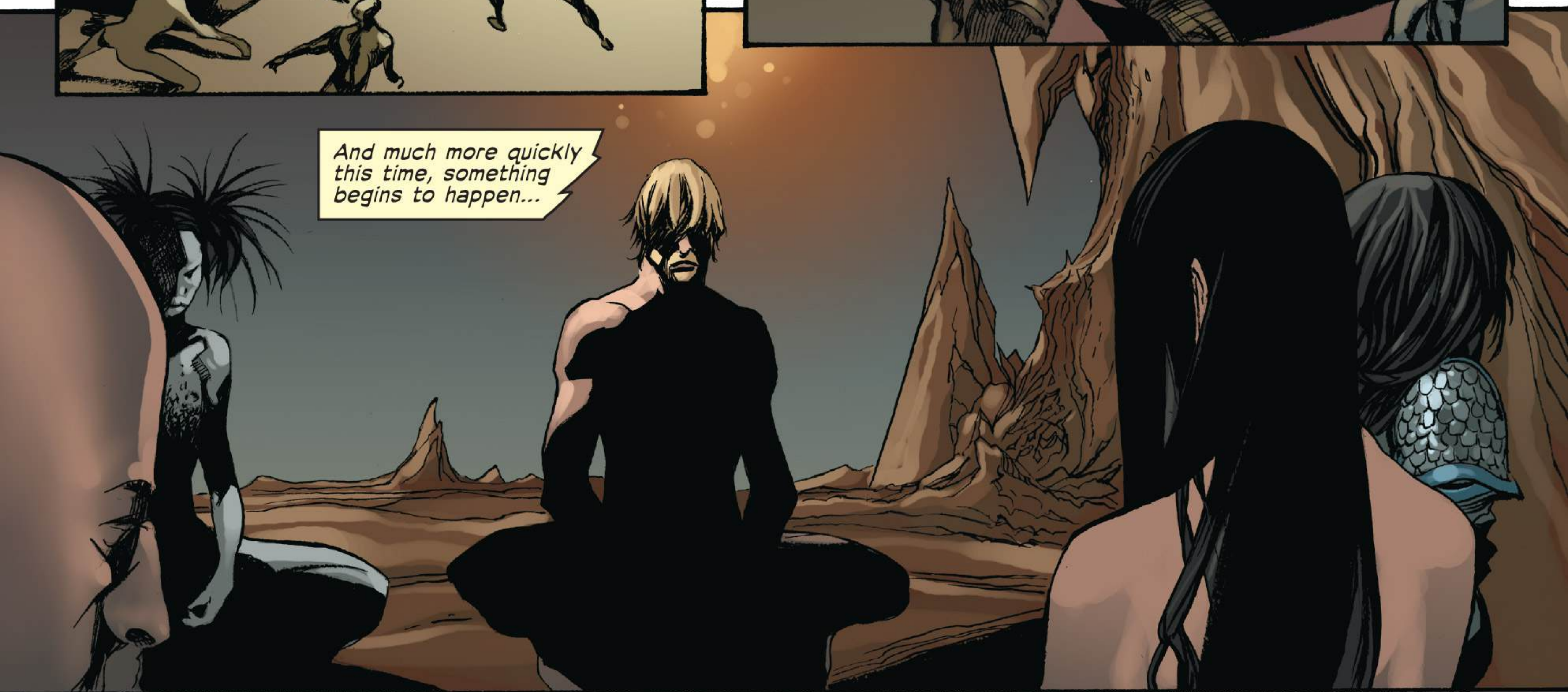
*We sit down and channel
our chi. Focus on the gate
that will take us home.*



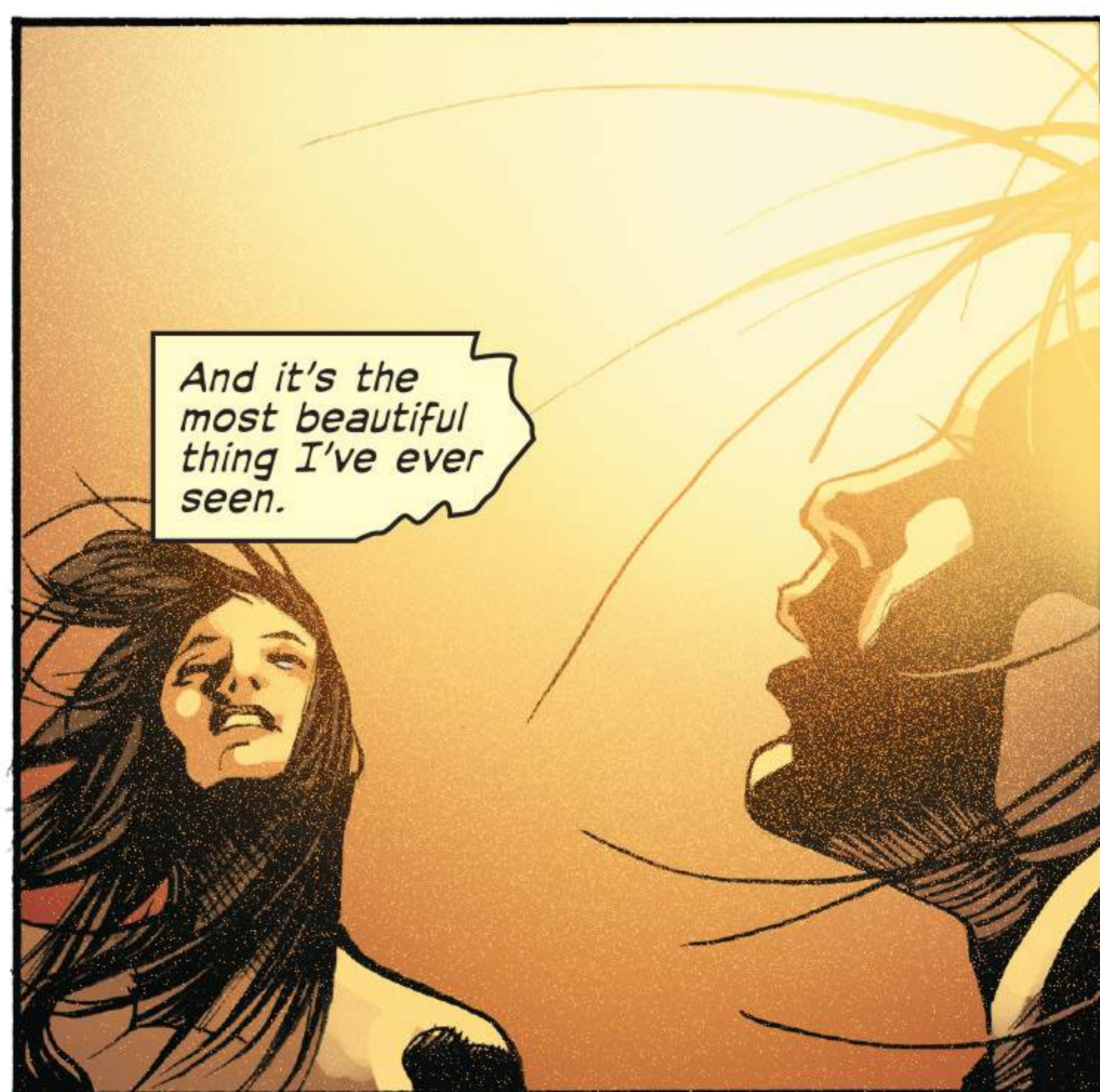
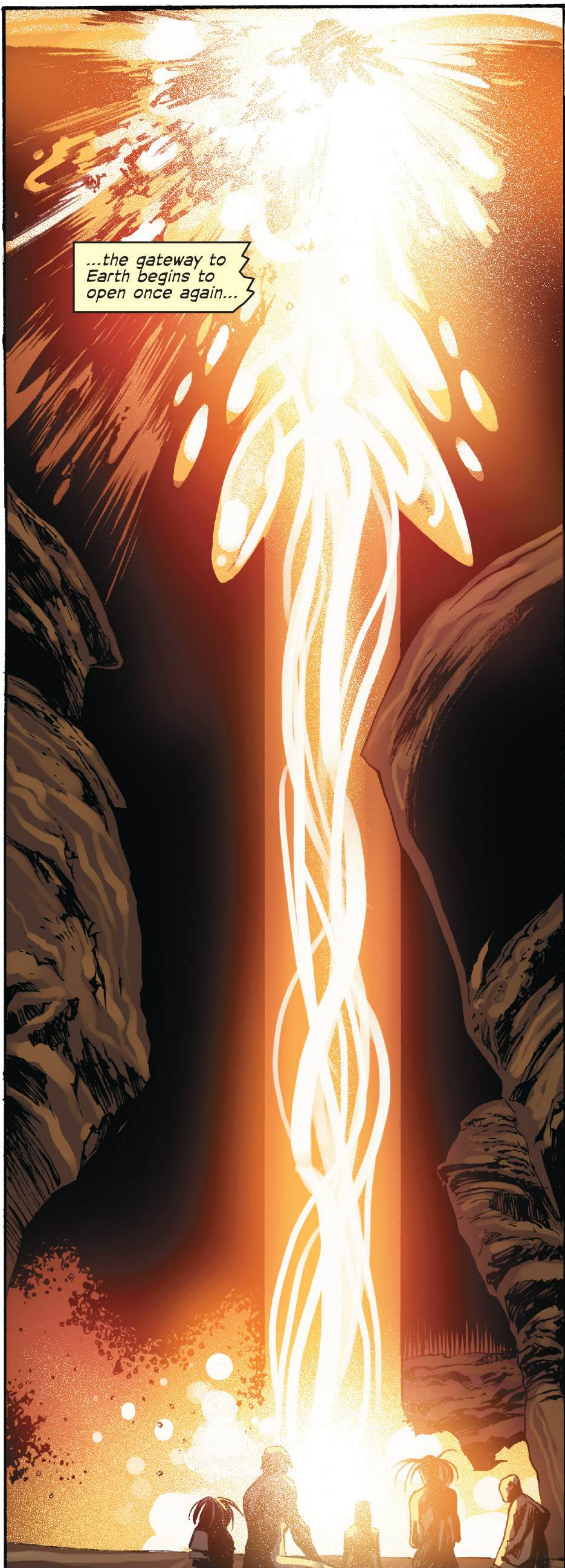
...WHEN I AM
SIPPING MEAD
WITH A DOZEN
CONCUBINES
TONIGHT!



**HA
HAAA
HAH!**



*And much more quickly
this time, something
begins to happen...*





*In that frozen moment,
I realize this has been
Quan's plan all along.*

*Beat us. Torture us.
Force us to plan a
breakout.*

*Wait until the moment we'd
opened the gate--something
he could have never forced
us to do--and then pounce...*

*...with his
secret army.*

NOW, IRON
FIST, YOU ARE
TRAPPED AND
SURROUNDED,
LIKE I WAS.



From the unseen journals of Quan Yaozu, the first Iron Fist.

I am Quan Yaozu, the first Iron Fist. My fellow Immortal Weapons and I defeated Changming and his minions of evil and banished them to this place--the Eighth City.

To seal the gate, however, I had to close it from the inside, damning myself to life in this hell--far below the steel spires of K'un-Lun.

I thought I had sacrificed myself for the city I loved.



But my city had lied.

Because even after the battle was over, K'un-Lun continued to punish its ordinary citizens with exile here. It was, after all, the perfect prison. One way in. No way out.



I had fought and sacrificed myself to prevent such corruption!

K'un-Lun should have been freed from fear and tyranny!



I then decided that I would free K'un-Lun once more, no matter what.

I began the prisoners' training in secret.



I passed along what had been taught to me when I was a child.

We would take K'un-Lun's sacred martial arts and use them against its corrupt leaders.



But first, we would use it against our captors.

YEEFAGH!



WHO SERVES AND PROTECTS YOU NOW, CHANG-MING?



NO...! IM-IMPOSSIBLE!



I punished him for his evil deeds, but refused to kill him.

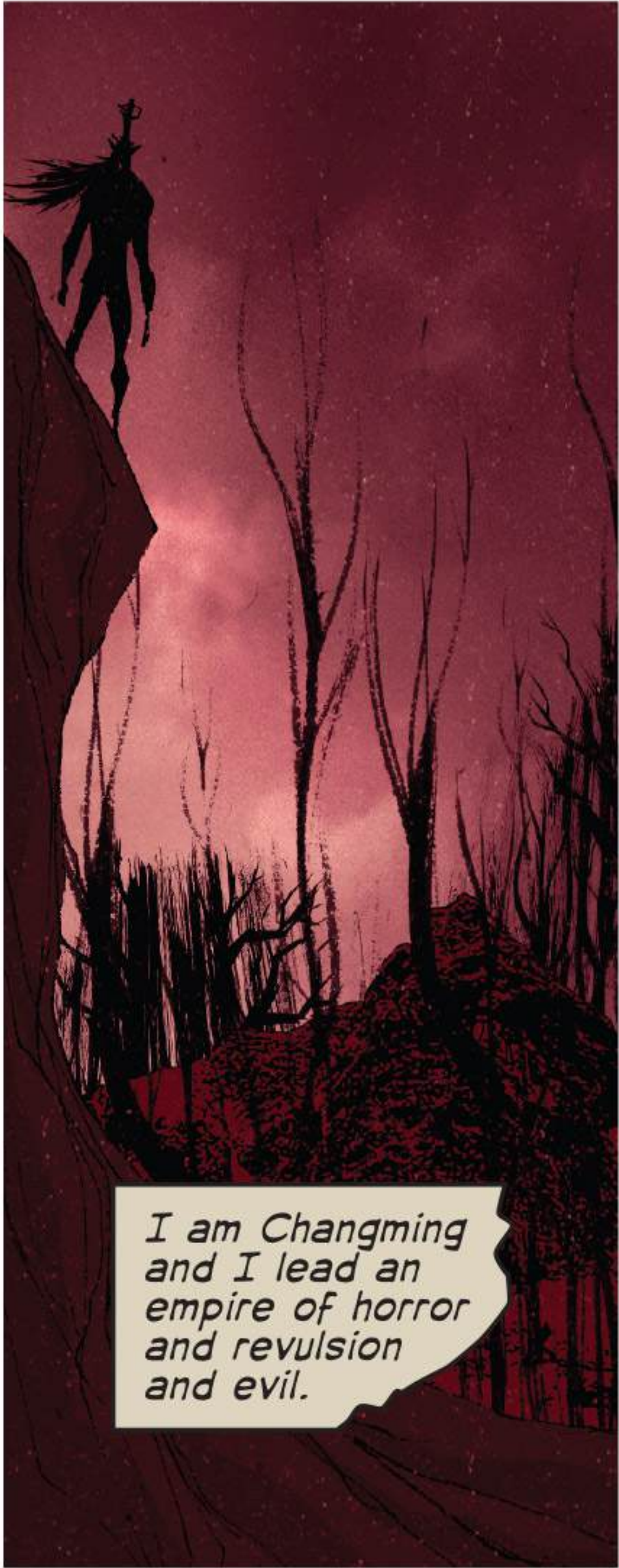
He would be my prisoner. My living reminder.



He would be forced to know my story and tell it for all eternity.



I **was** Quan. I am now Changming.



I am Changming and I lead an empire of horror and revulsion and evil.



And someday K'un-Lun and the cities will have to send their Weapons to deal with us...

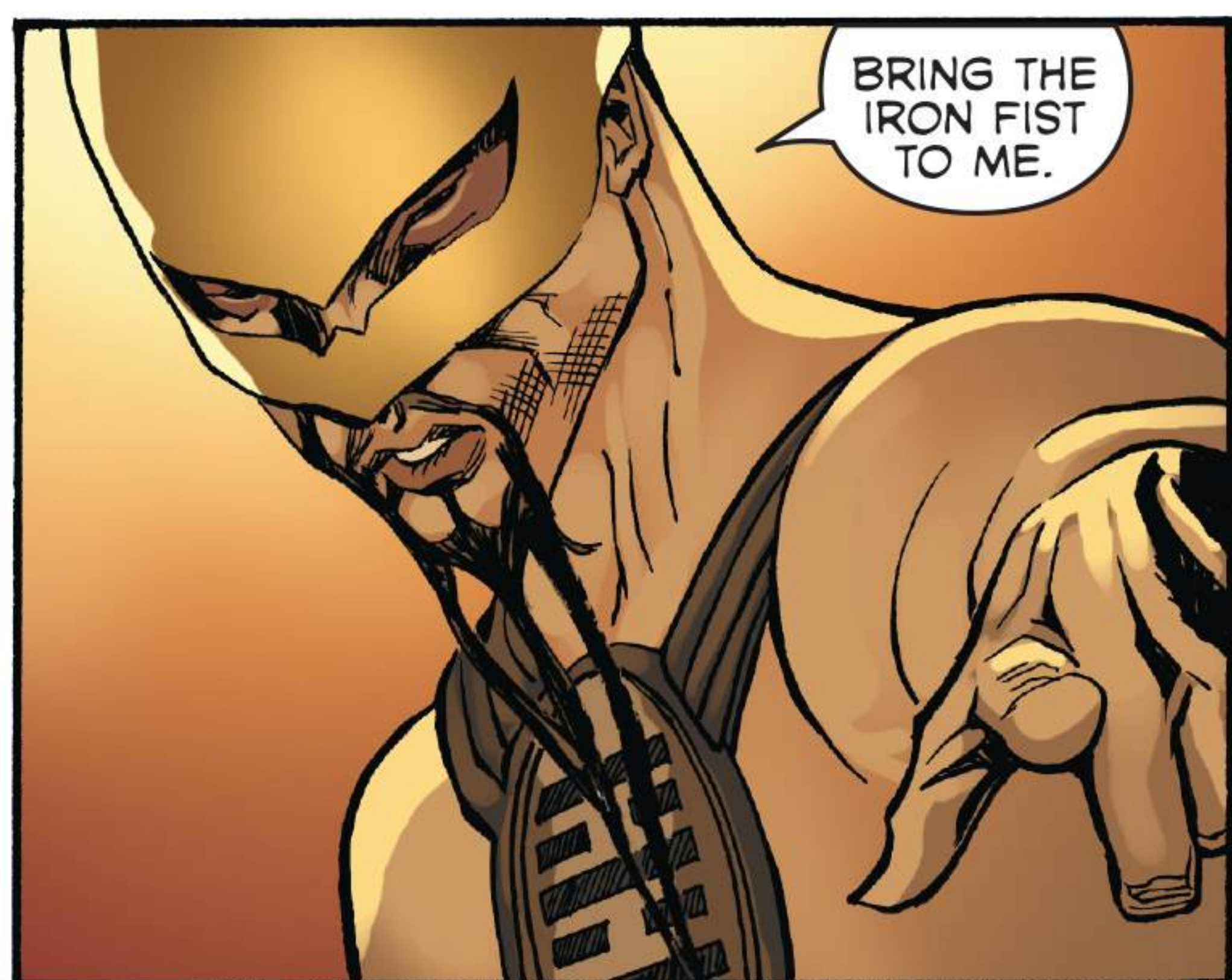


AND AS
PROPHESED,
HERE YOU
ARE.

SURRENDER,
OR WE SLAUGHTER
EVERY LAST
PRISONER.

*I should have
known. This was
still Hell, after all.*

*Hell was being on the edge of
freedom, only to have it snatched
away from you at the last moment.*



BRING THE
IRON FIST
TO ME.



YOU WILL
LEAD US TO
K'UN-LUN,
WHERE WE
WILL CRUSH
THEIR
LEADERS
UNDER THE
HEELS OF OUR
BOOTS.

IF YOU
REFUSE, WE
WILL DESTROY
THE WORLD
BEYOND THESE
GATES. AND EVERY
WORLD BETWEEN
HERE AND THE
CITY OF LIES.



YOU'RE
MAKING A MISTAKE.
THE CORRUPT HAVE
BEEN OVER-
THROWN.

K'UN-LUN
WILL HONOR
ITS FIRST
CHAMPION.

WE'RE
HERE TO
RESCUE
YOU!



MORE
LIES.

SOLDIERS!
PREPARE
YOURSELVES
FOR THE GATE
FORMATION!

Apparently, they
had been planning
this for years.

Training themselves to build
a *human-monster-demon*
ladder up to the gate.

I guess this is what you
do in Hell when there's
nothing else to do.

FASTER!
THE GATE WON'T
REMAIN OPEN
FOREVER.

I NEVER
WANT TO TOUCH
ANOTHER BODY
PART AGAIN.

I WANT
TO PUNCH EVERY
FACE I SEE.

THINK
DANNY HAS
SOMETHING
IN MIND?

IF SO,
HE'S A
SMARTER
MAN
THAN I.



EVERYTHING LOOKS EXACTLY THE SAME...THE OUTERWORLD, A FROZEN WASTELAND...

IT'S REMOTE CHINA. WHAT DID YOU EXPECT, A BURGER KI--



STEP ASIDE, DANNY.

Oh NO.



HAVE YOU LOST YOUR FREAKIN' MIND, DAVOS? PUT THE GUN DOWN!



SORRY. THIS IS HOW IT MUST END.



BLAM

NO--!



AGH!



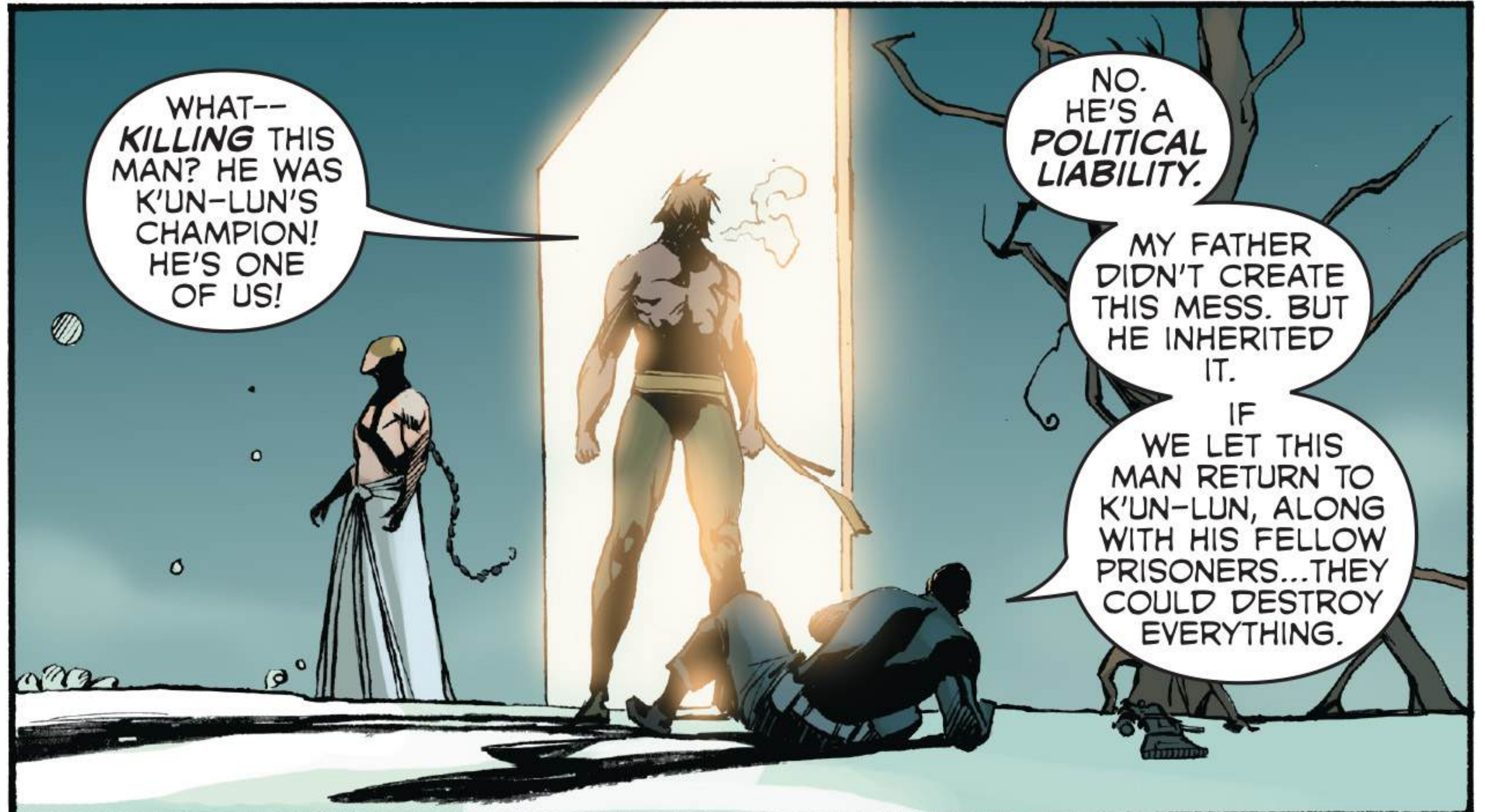
DANNY,
I DON'T
WANT TO
HURT YOU,
BUT--



HAI!



YOU'VE
COMPLETED
YOUR MISSION.
NOW LET ME
DO *MINE*.



WHAT--
KILLING THIS
MAN? HE WAS
K'UN-LUN'S
CHAMPION!
HE'S ONE
OF US!

NO.
HE'S A
**POLITICAL
LIABILITY.**

MY FATHER
DIDN'T CREATE
THIS MESS. BUT
HE INHERITED
IT.

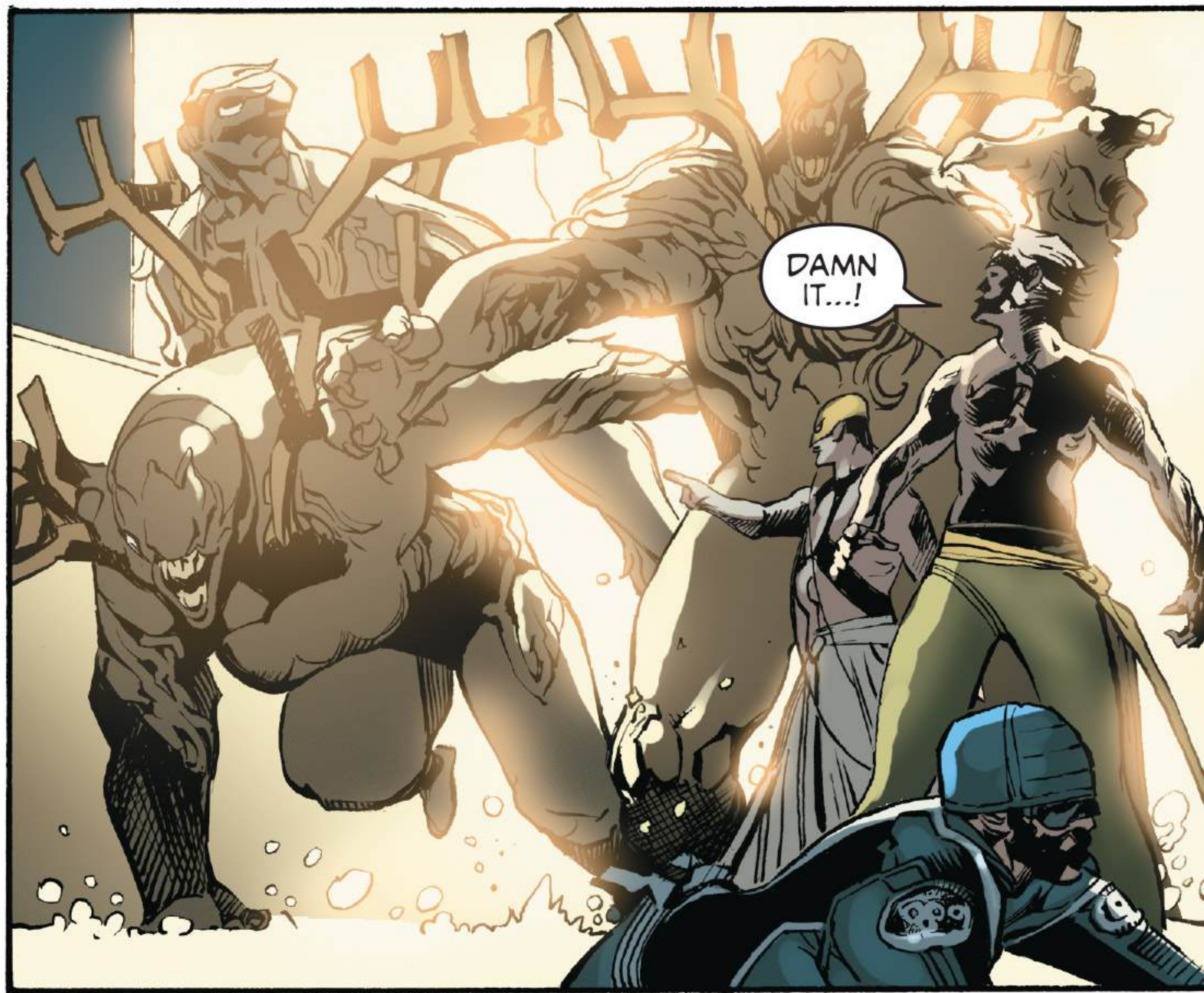
IF
WE LET THIS
MAN RETURN TO
K'UN-LUN, ALONG
WITH HIS FELLOW
PRISONERS...THEY
COULD DESTROY
EVERYTHING.



YOUR
FATHER KNEW
ABOUT THIS?!

HE KNEW
IT WAS POSSIBLE
THAT THE FIRST
IRON FIST WAS
STILL ALIVE.

AND HE KNEW
WHAT THE VERY IDEA OF
HIM COULD DO TO OUR CITY.
THE PEOPLE OF K'UN-LUN
SHOULDN'T SUFFER FOR THE SINS
OF THEIR FORMER LEADERS.



DAMN
IT...!

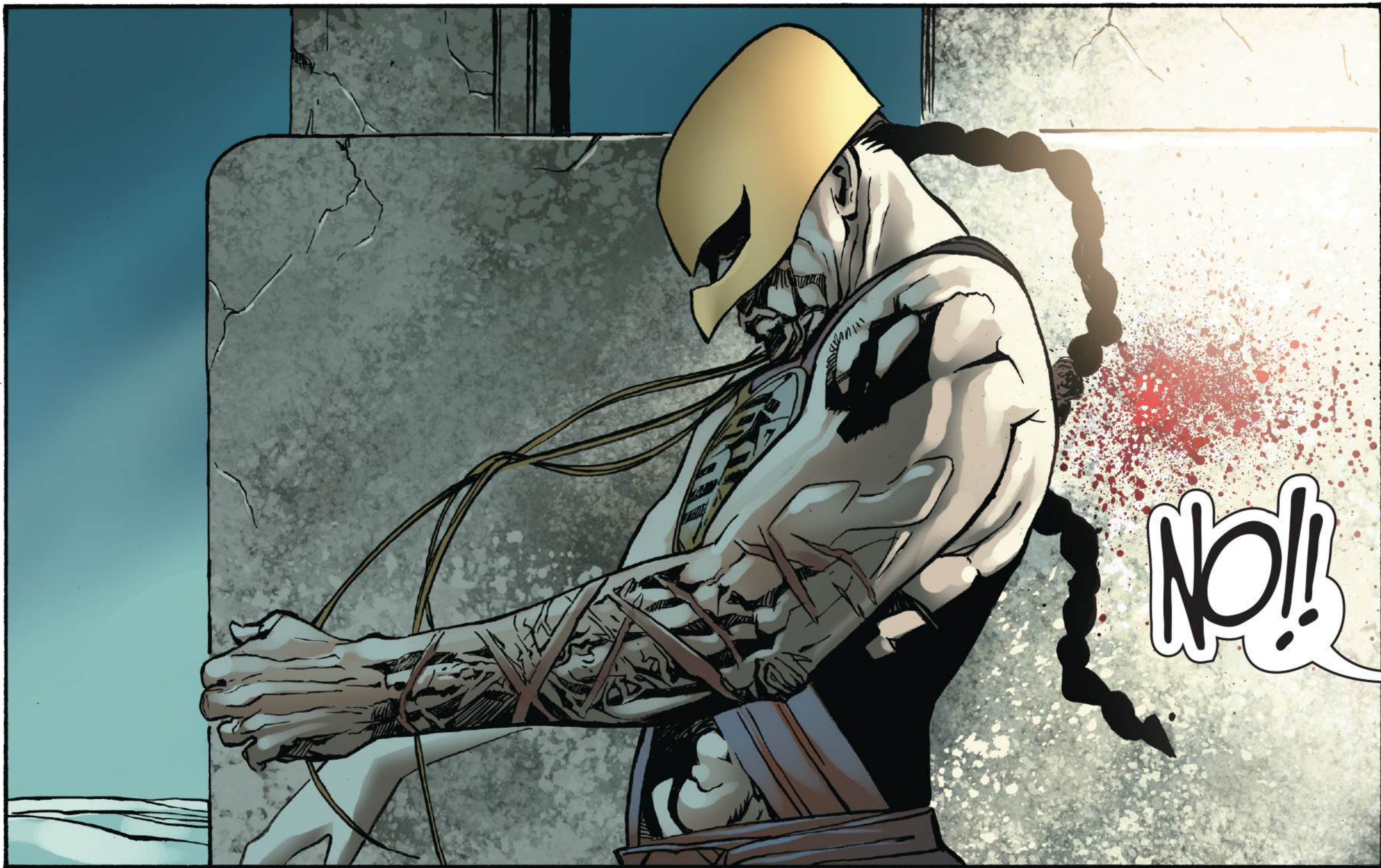


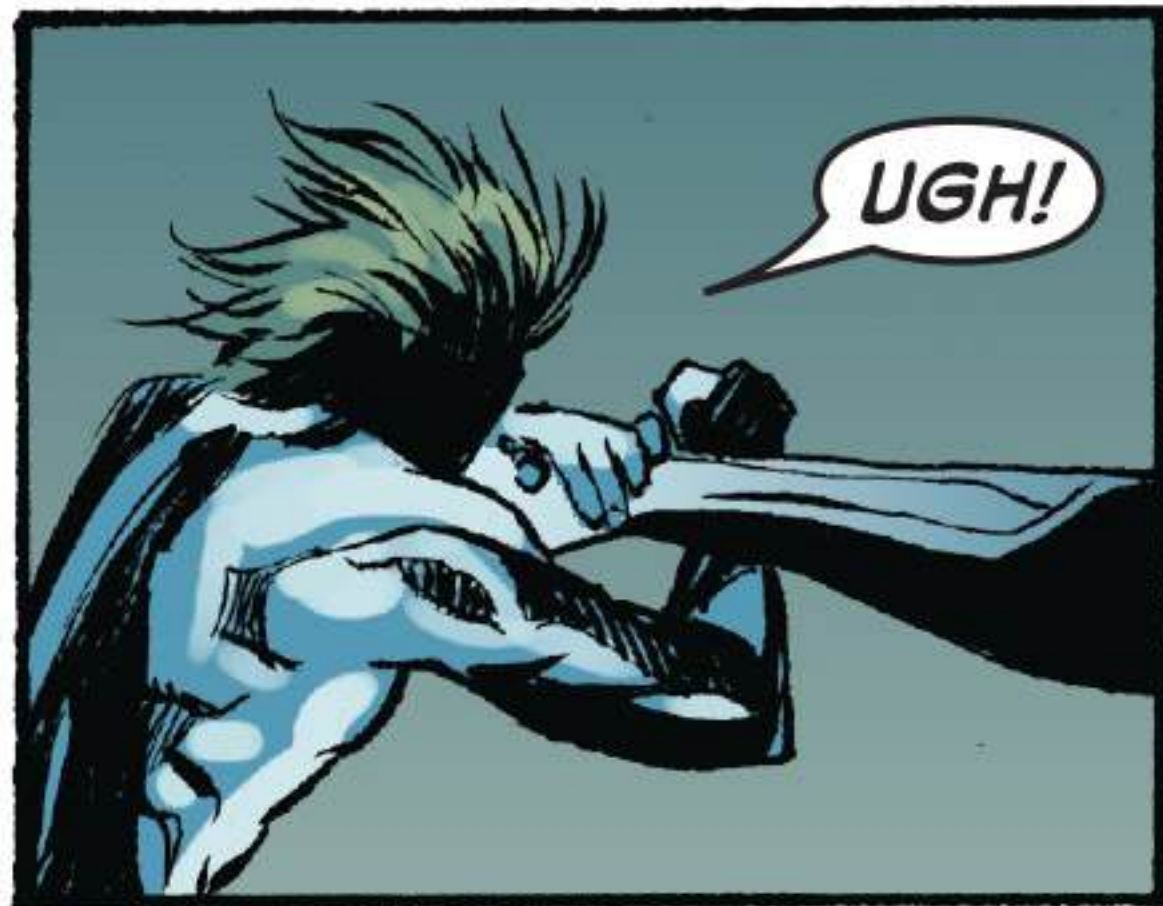
HE ALSO KNEW YOU COULDN'T
BE TRUSTED TO DO WHAT
WAS NECESSARY.

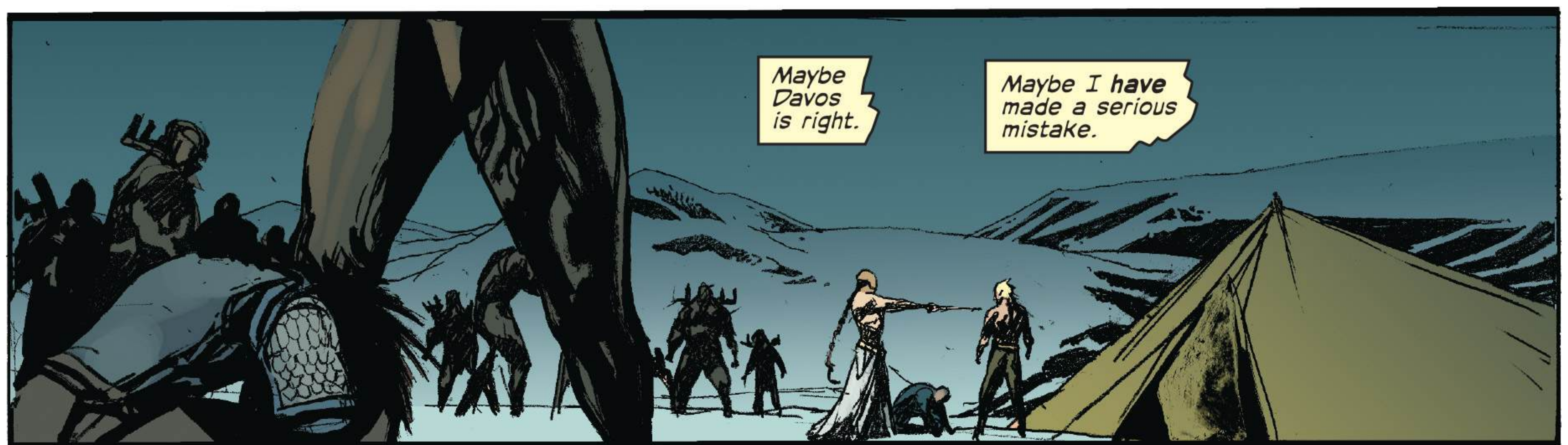
TOO OFTEN,
YOUR **HEART**
CLOUDS YOUR
BRAIN.

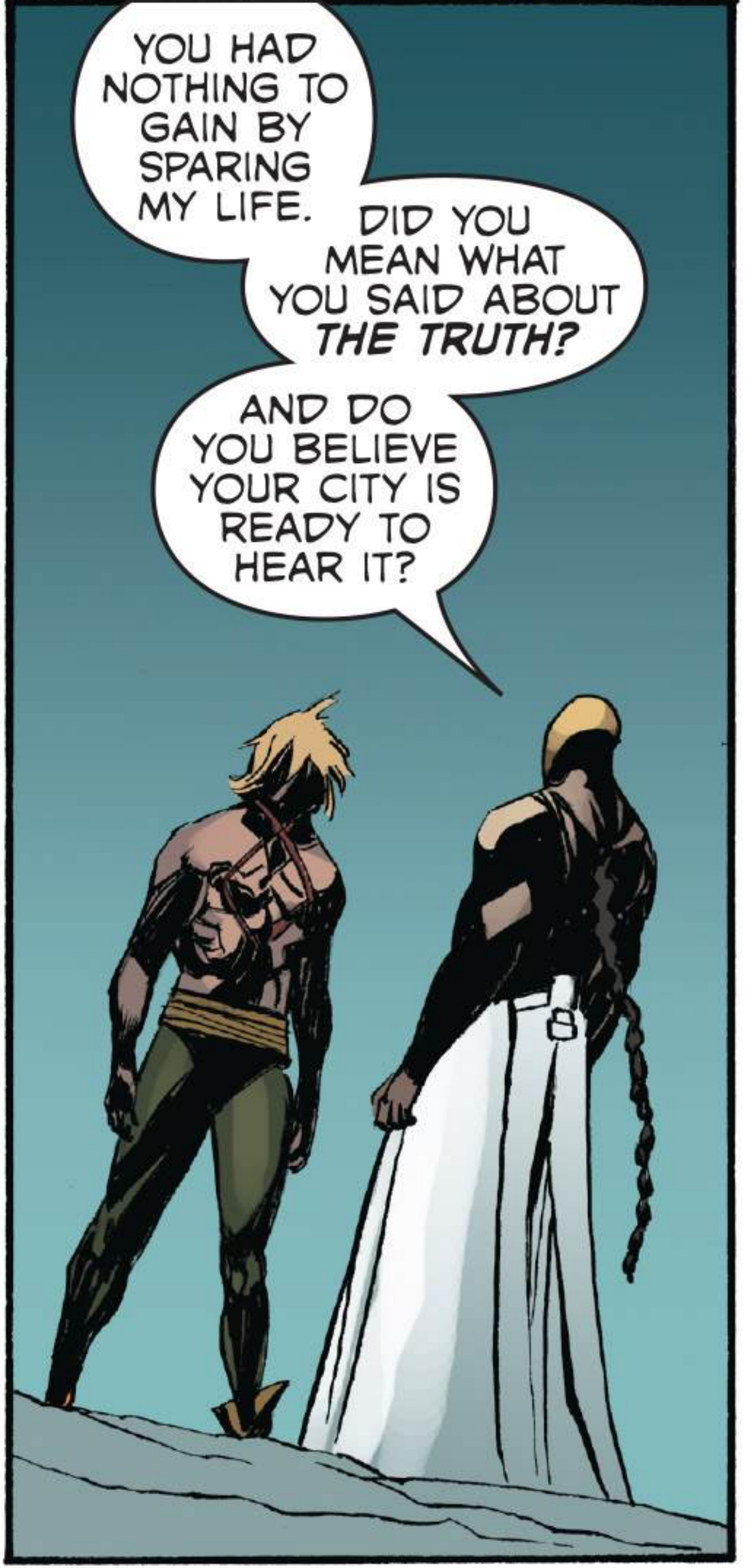
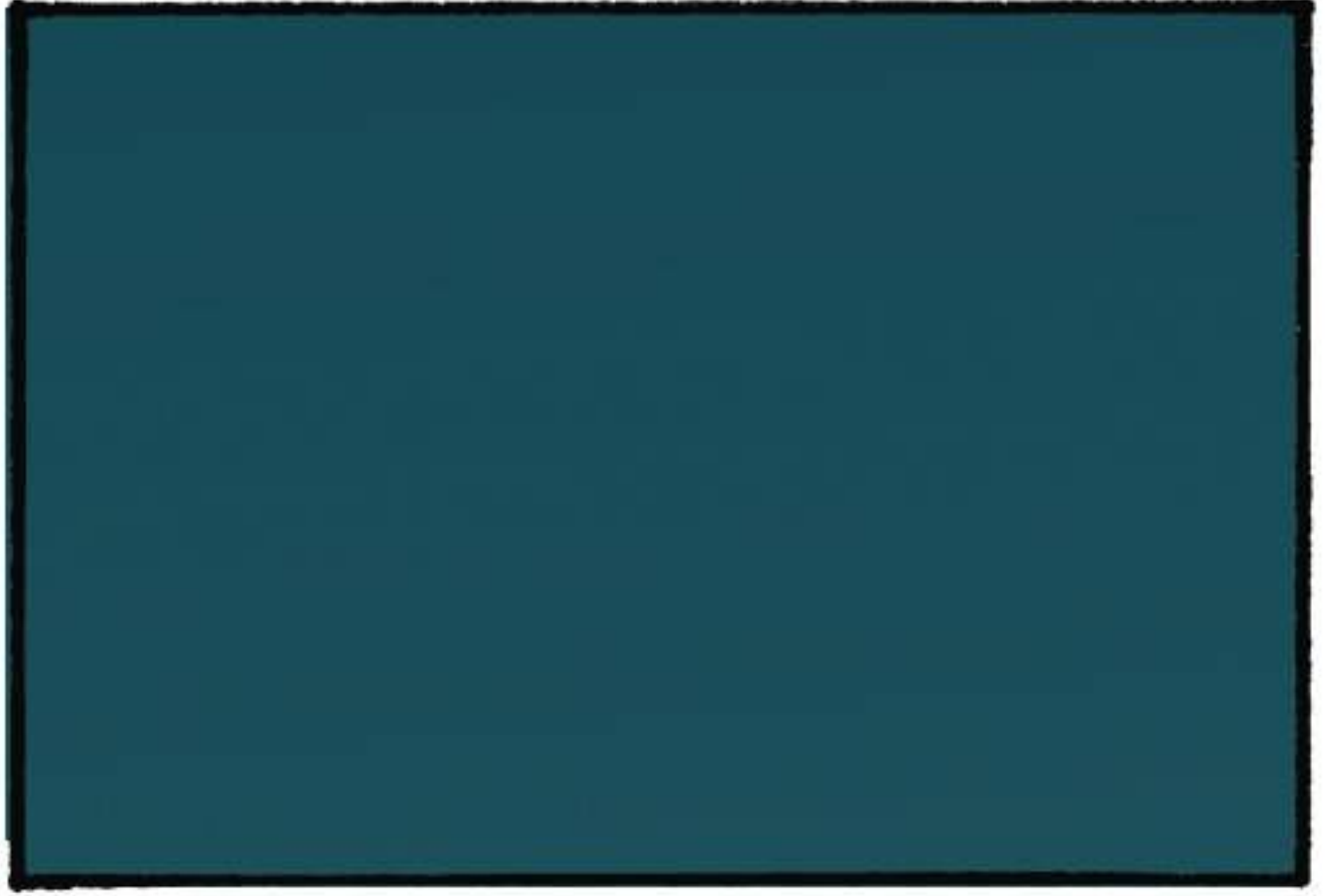


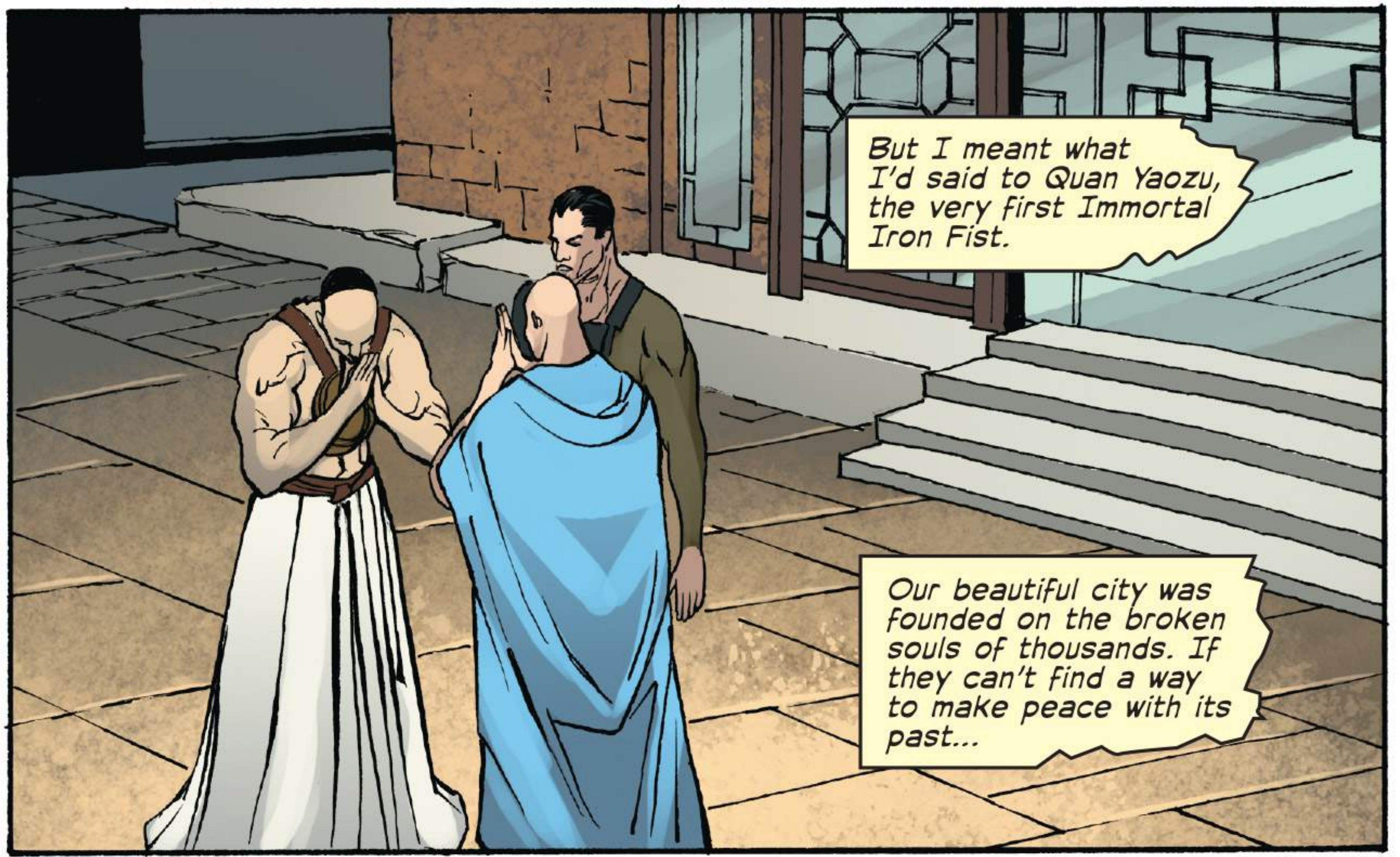
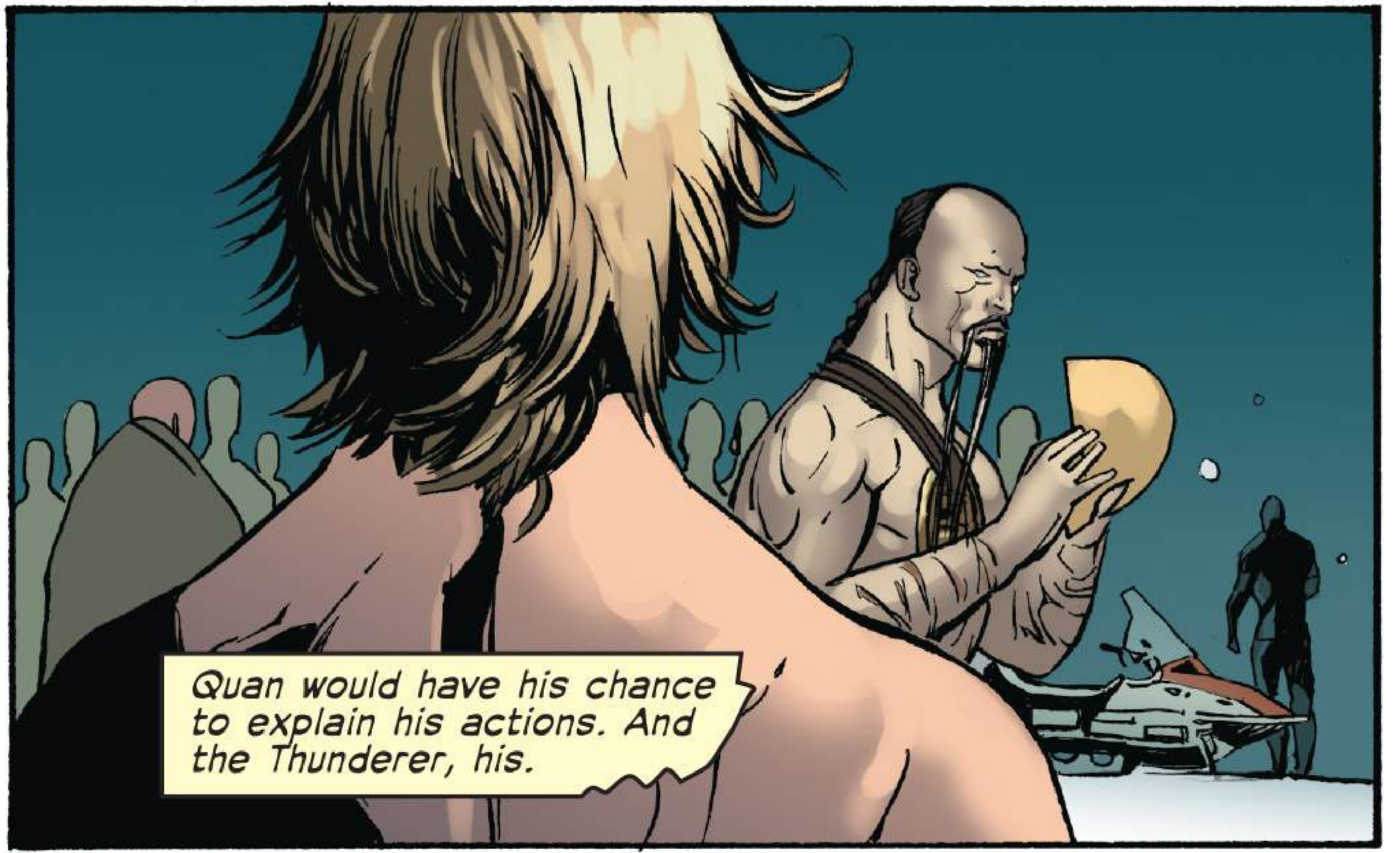
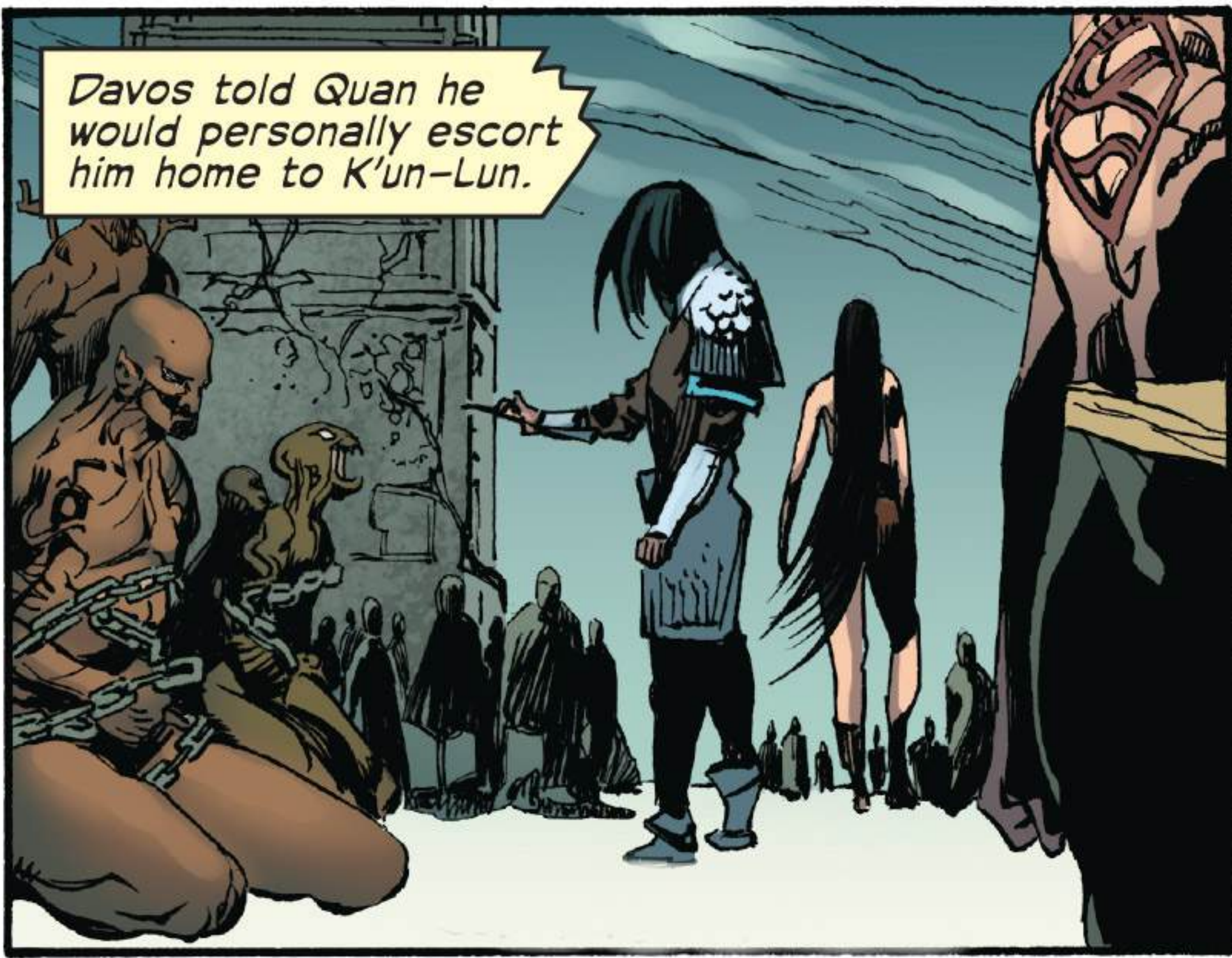
BLAM











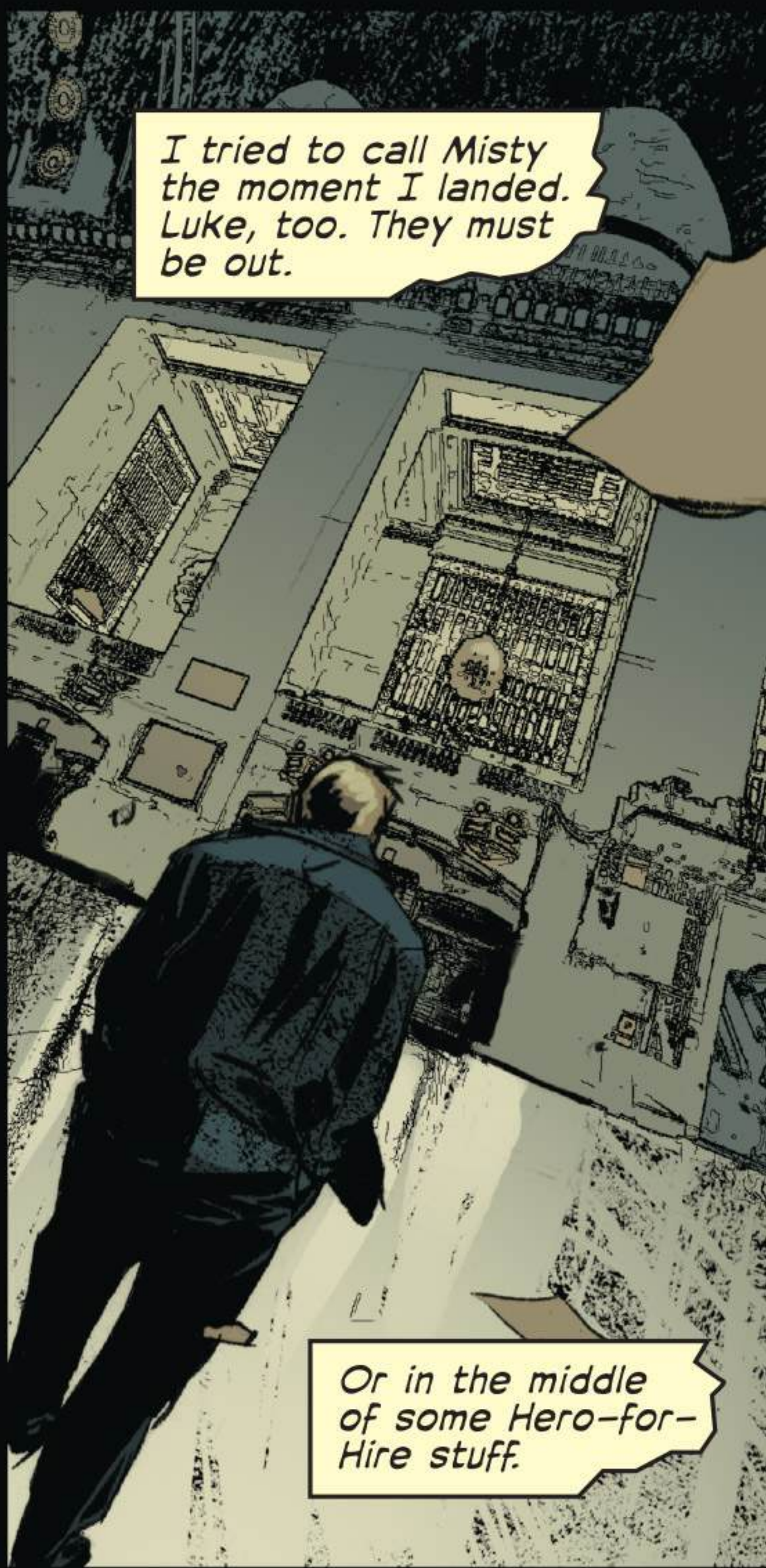


Times Square.
One day later.

Feels like I've been gone for
years...decades...but only a few
weeks have passed.



I mean, geez--the
headlines more or
less look the same
as when I left.



I tried to call Misty
the moment I landed.
Luke, too. They must
be out.

Or in the middle
of some Hero-for-
Hire stuff.



What I really need, though,
is a blazingly hot shower, a
weed-whacker for my face
and new underwear.



The beard's
gonna freak
everybody out.

Do I have a
spare razor
in my office?



Oh, my office.
I just want to lie
down on the floor
and sleep for a year.



DING



As it
turns
out...

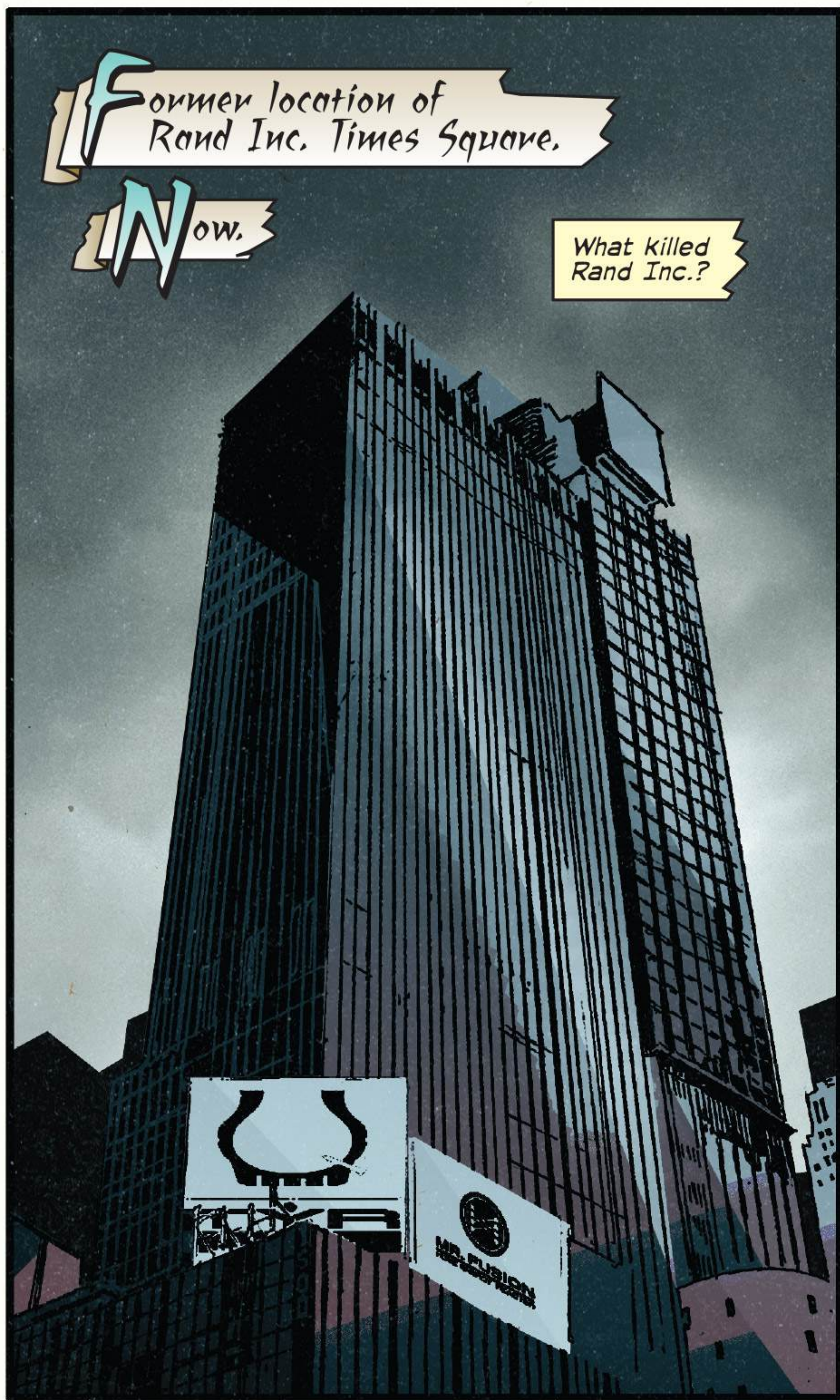


...I have been
away a long time.

鐵拳
27



KAARE
鉄拳





HAIL
HYDRA!

Me.

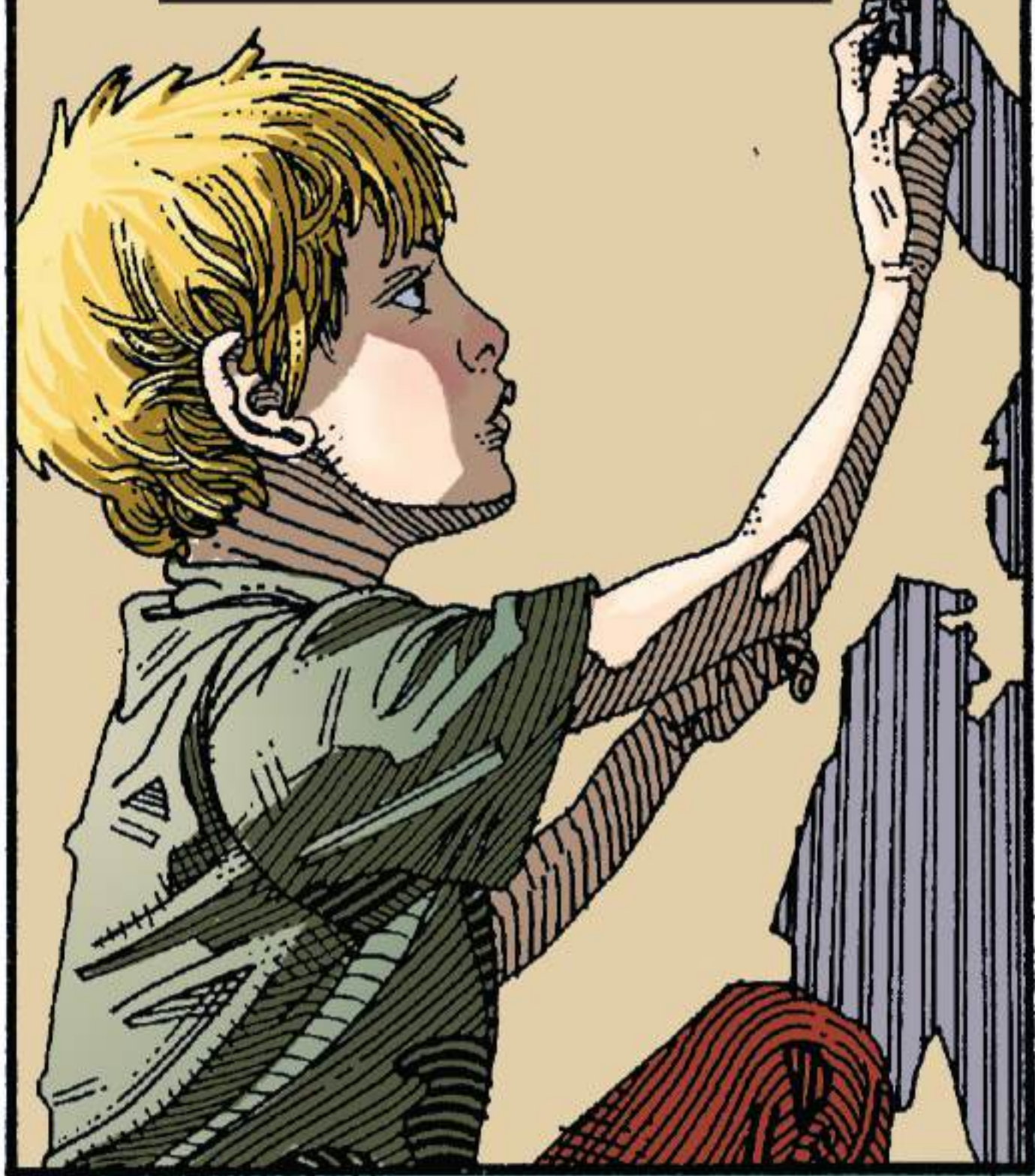
I'd gone off to a
mystical city to do
my hero thing.

And meanwhile I'd let
Rand--a company my
father built from nothing--
wither and die.

== THE ==
FALL OF THE
HOUSE OF
RAND

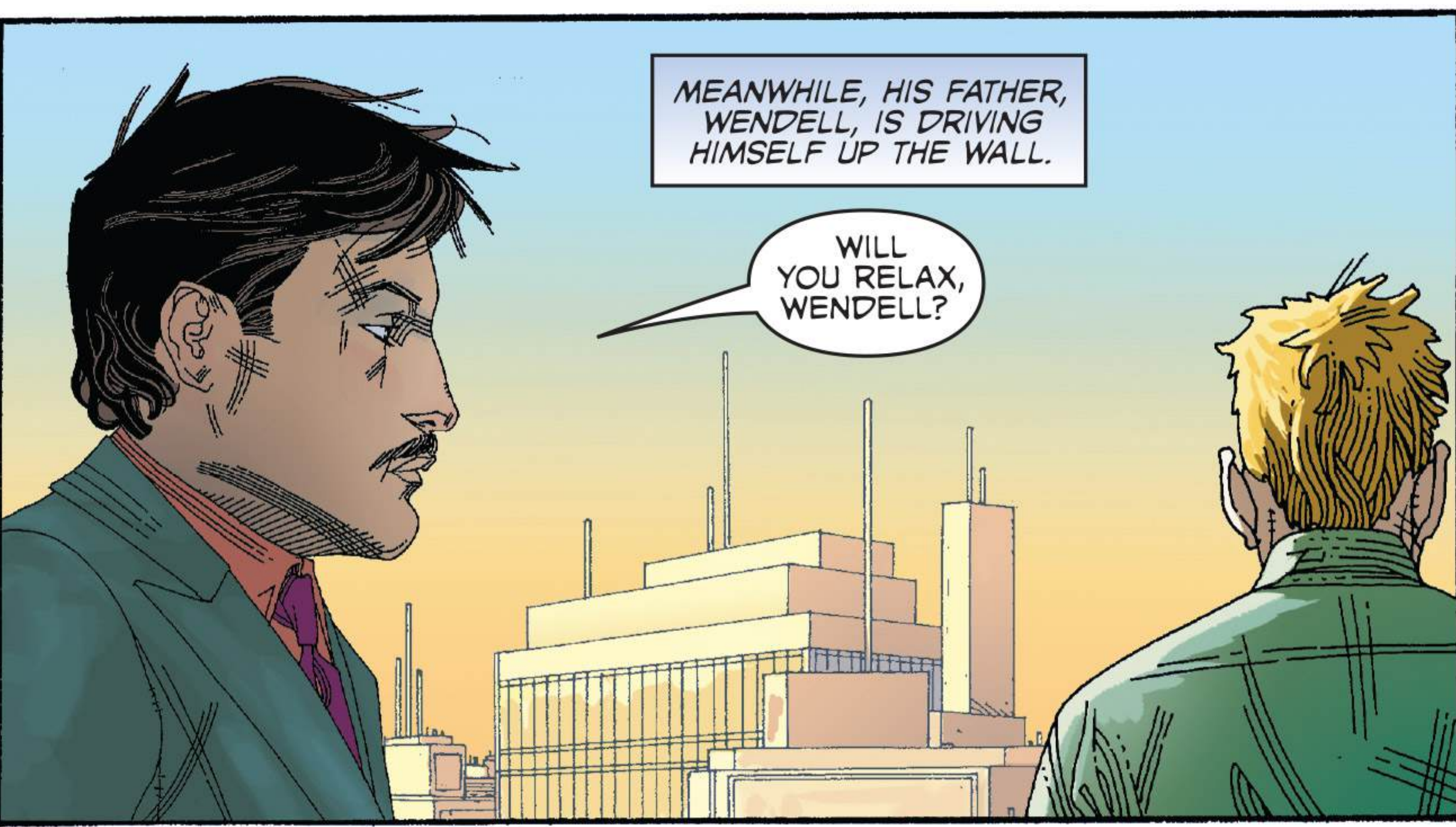
Rand Inc. Twenty-five years ago.

DANNY RAND IS PRETENDING HE CAN DRIVE A CAR UP THE SIDE OF A BUILDING.



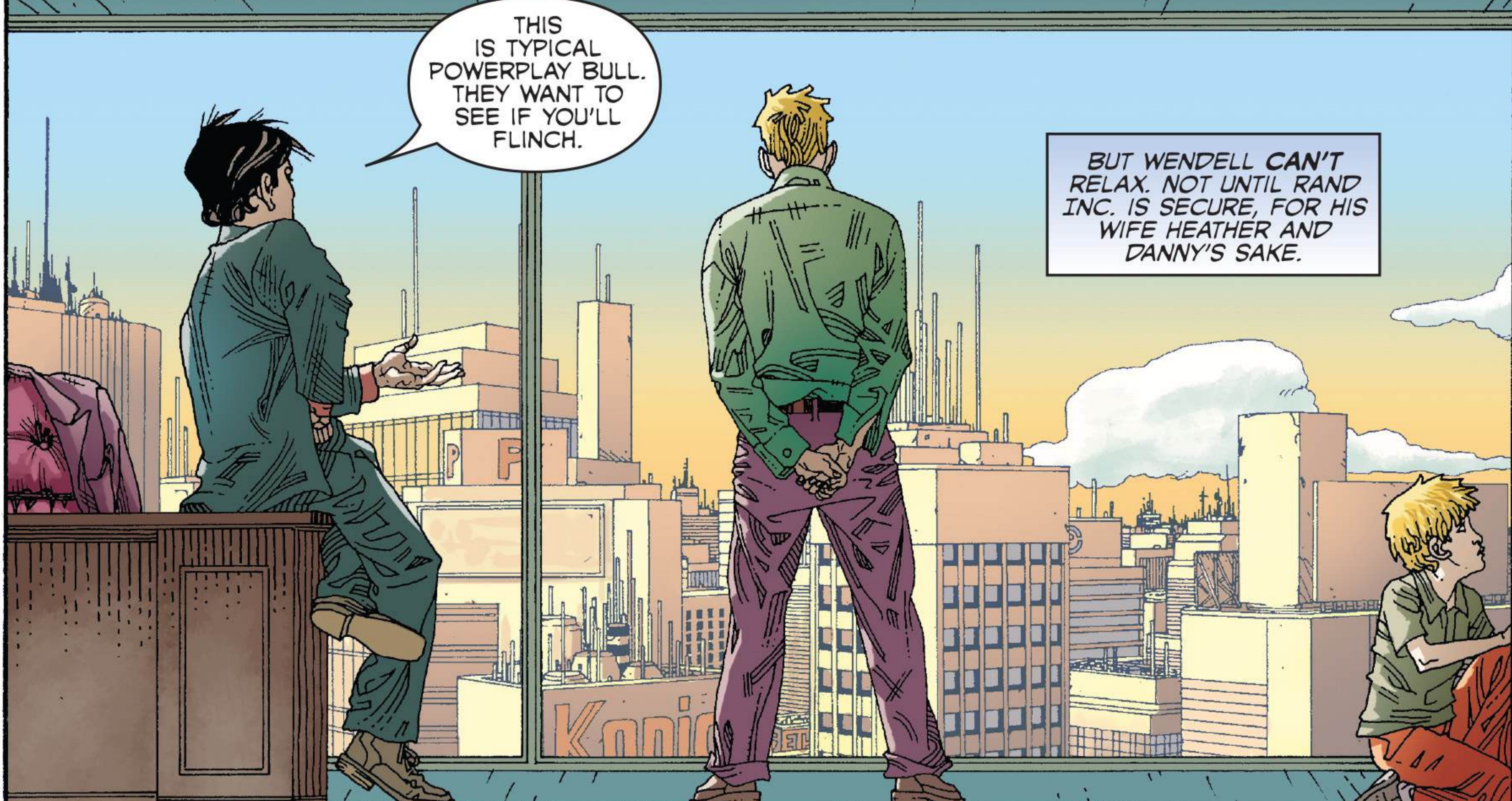
MEANWHILE, HIS FATHER, WENDELL, IS DRIVING HIMSELF UP THE WALL.

WILL YOU RELAX, WENDELL?

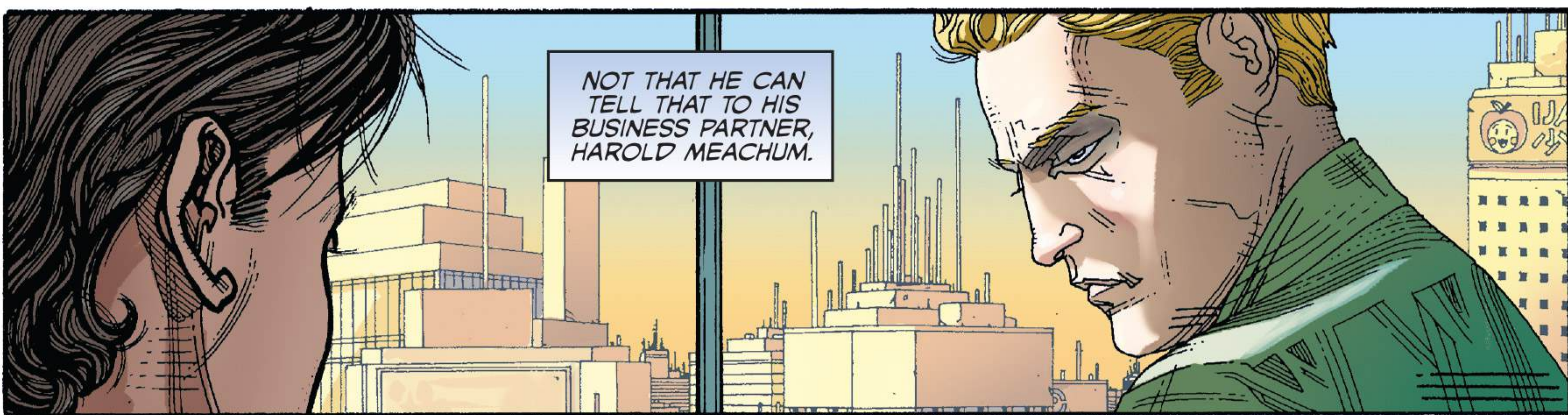


THIS IS TYPICAL POWERPLAY BULL. THEY WANT TO SEE IF YOU'LL FLINCH.

BUT WENDELL CAN'T RELAX. NOT UNTIL RAND INC. IS SECURE, FOR HIS WIFE HEATHER AND DANNY'S SAKE.

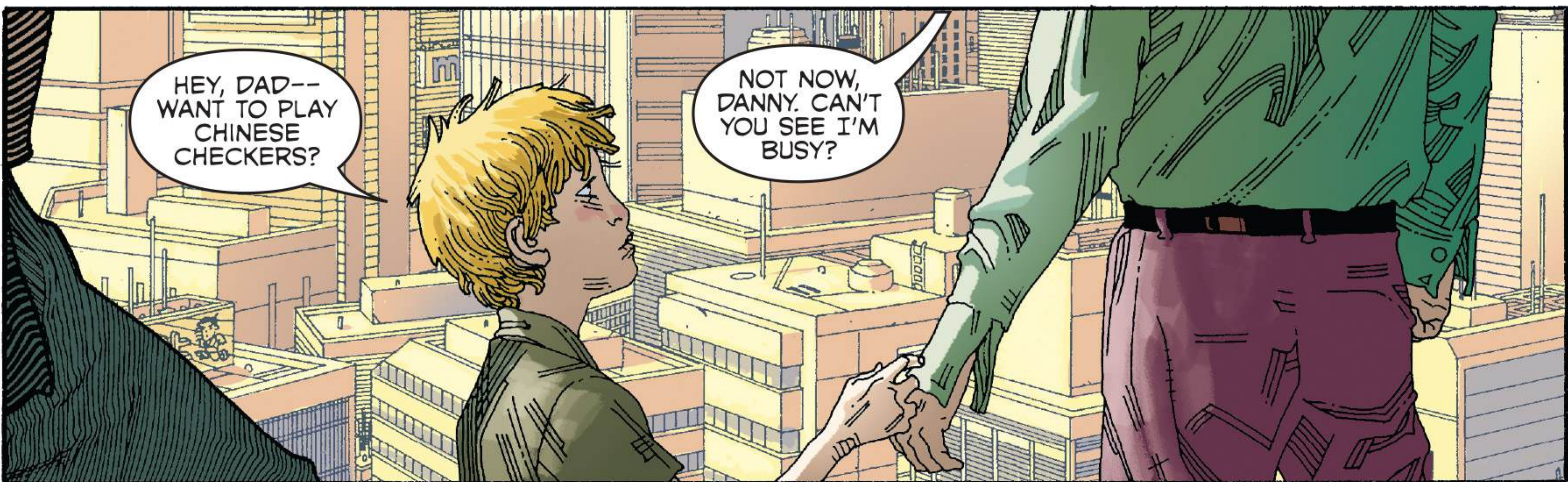


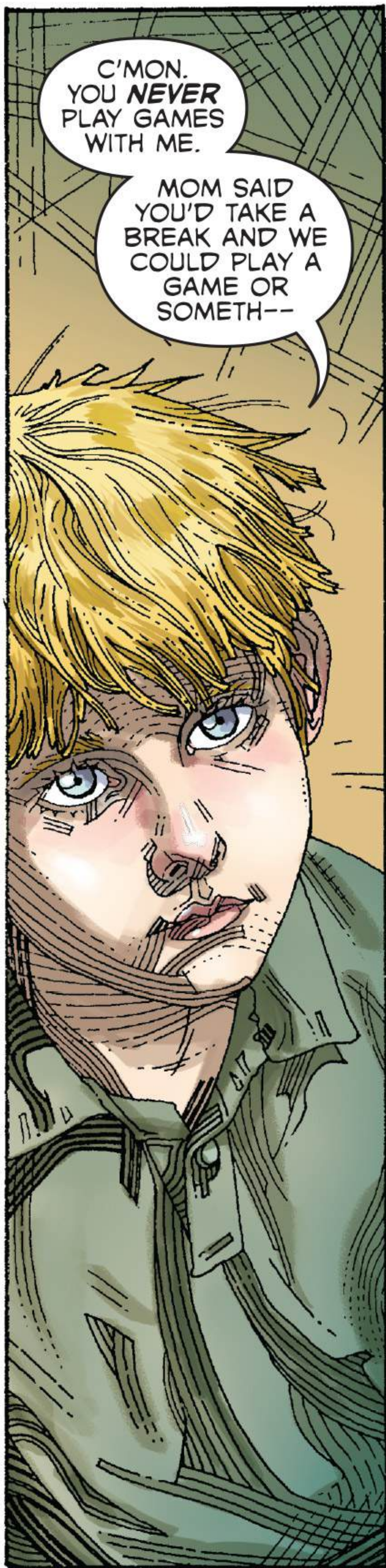
NOT THAT HE CAN TELL THAT TO HIS BUSINESS PARTNER, HAROLD MEACHUM.



HEY, DAD-- WANT TO PLAY CHINESE CHECKERS?

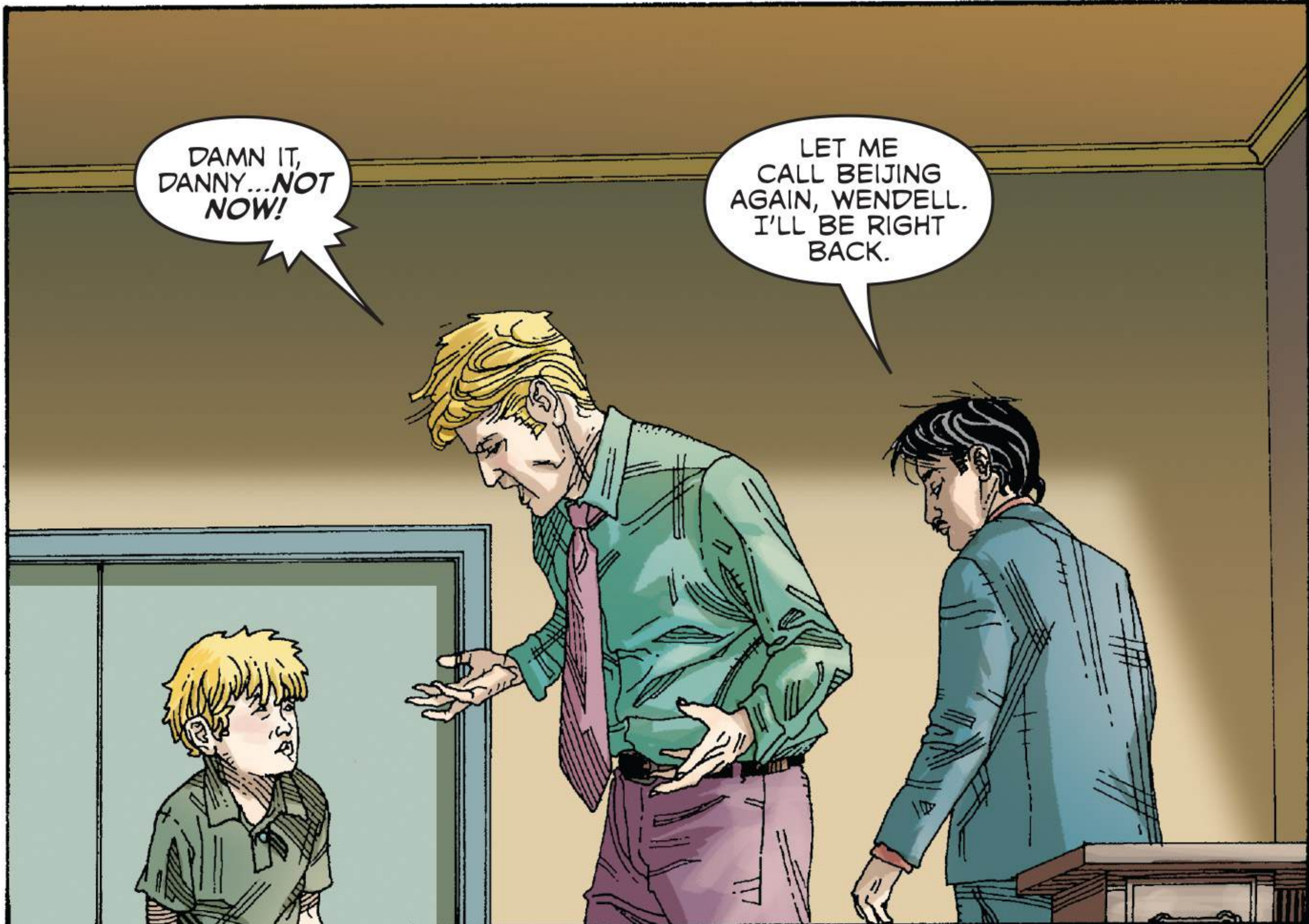
NOT NOW, DANNY. CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BUSY?





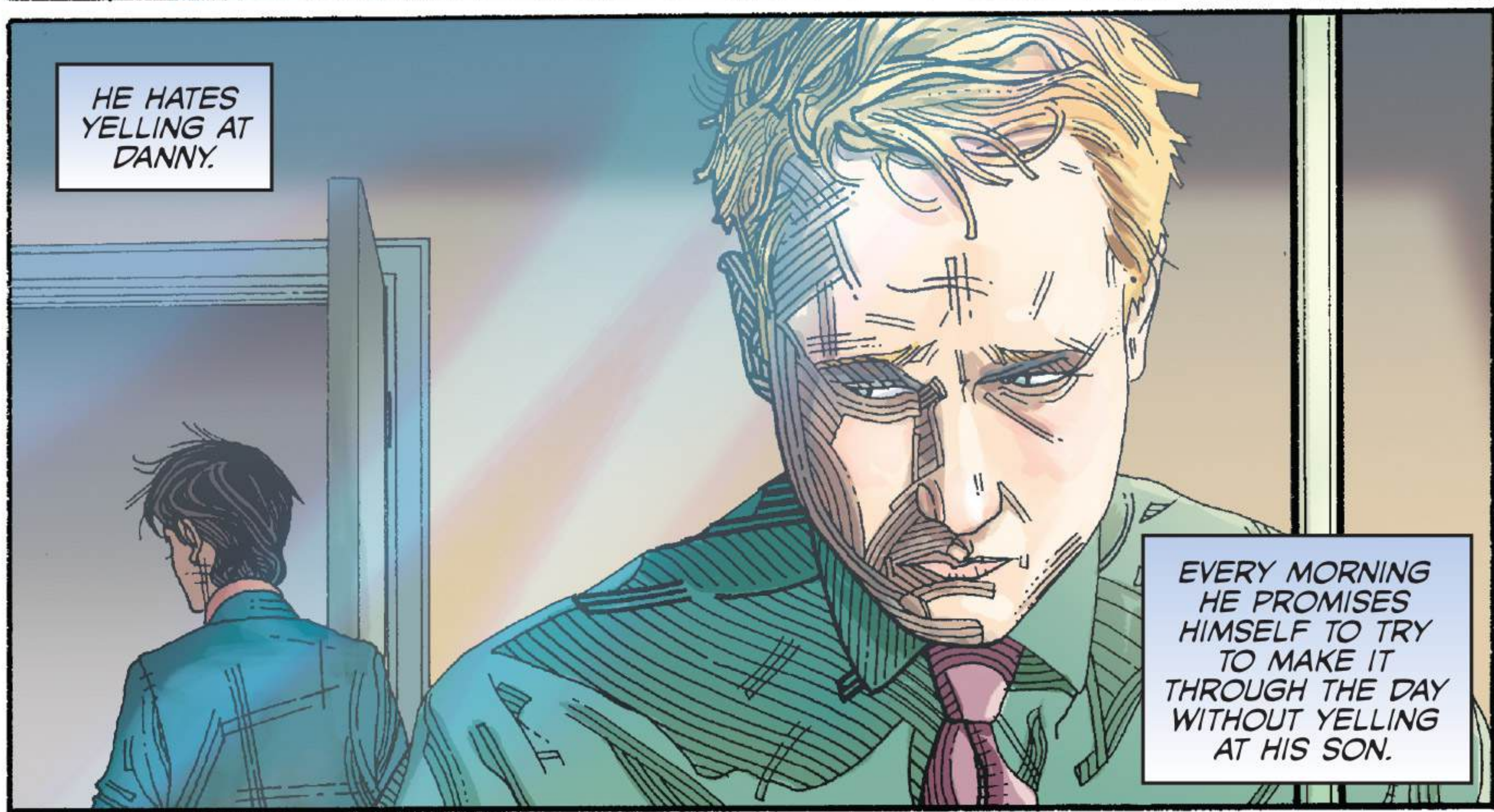
C'MON.
YOU **NEVER**
PLAY GAMES
WITH ME.

MOM SAID
YOU'D TAKE A
BREAK AND WE
COULD PLAY A
GAME OR
SOMETH--



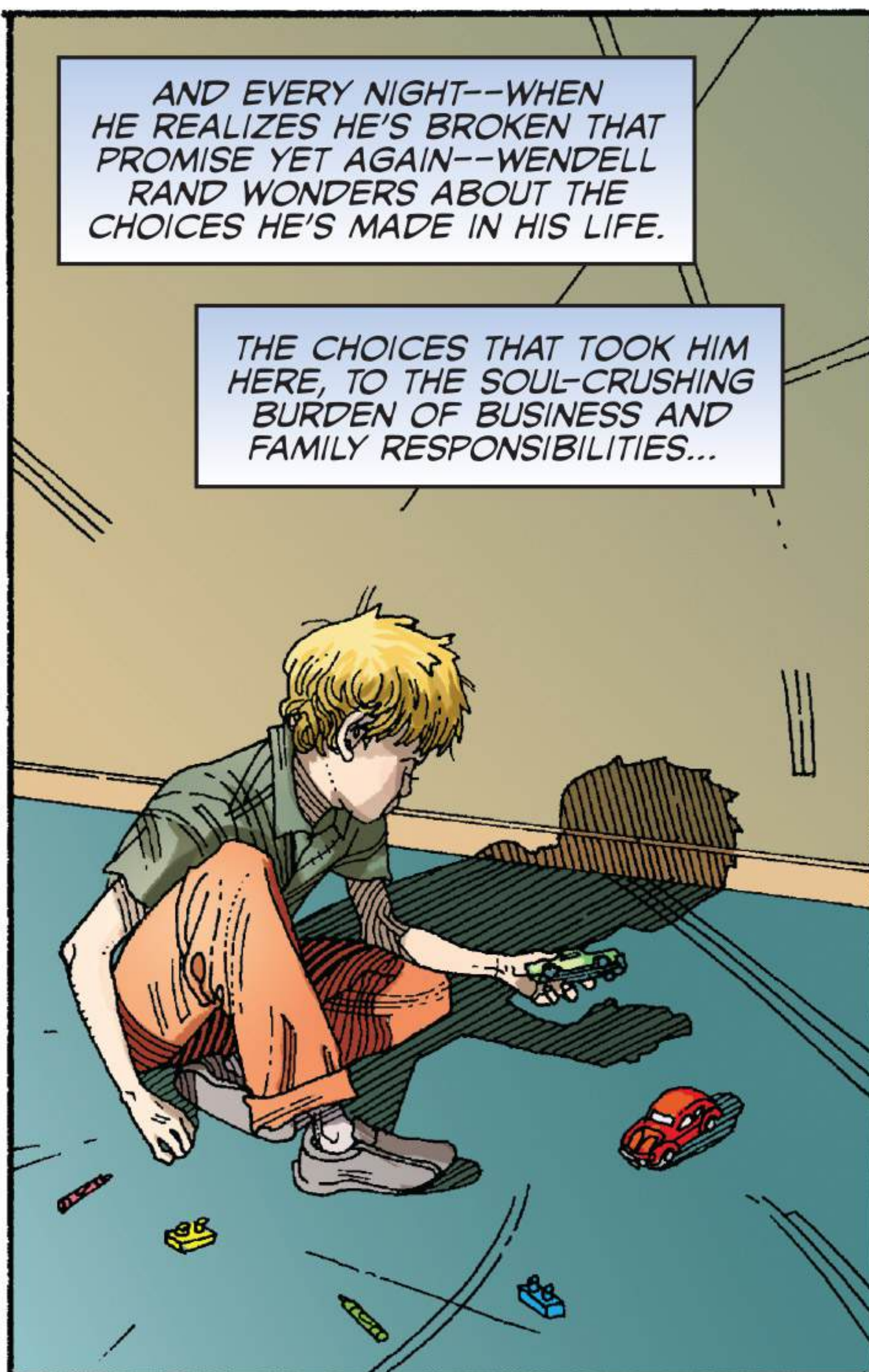
DAMN IT,
DANNY...**NOT**
NOW!

LET ME
CALL BEIJING
AGAIN, WENDELL.
I'LL BE RIGHT
BACK.



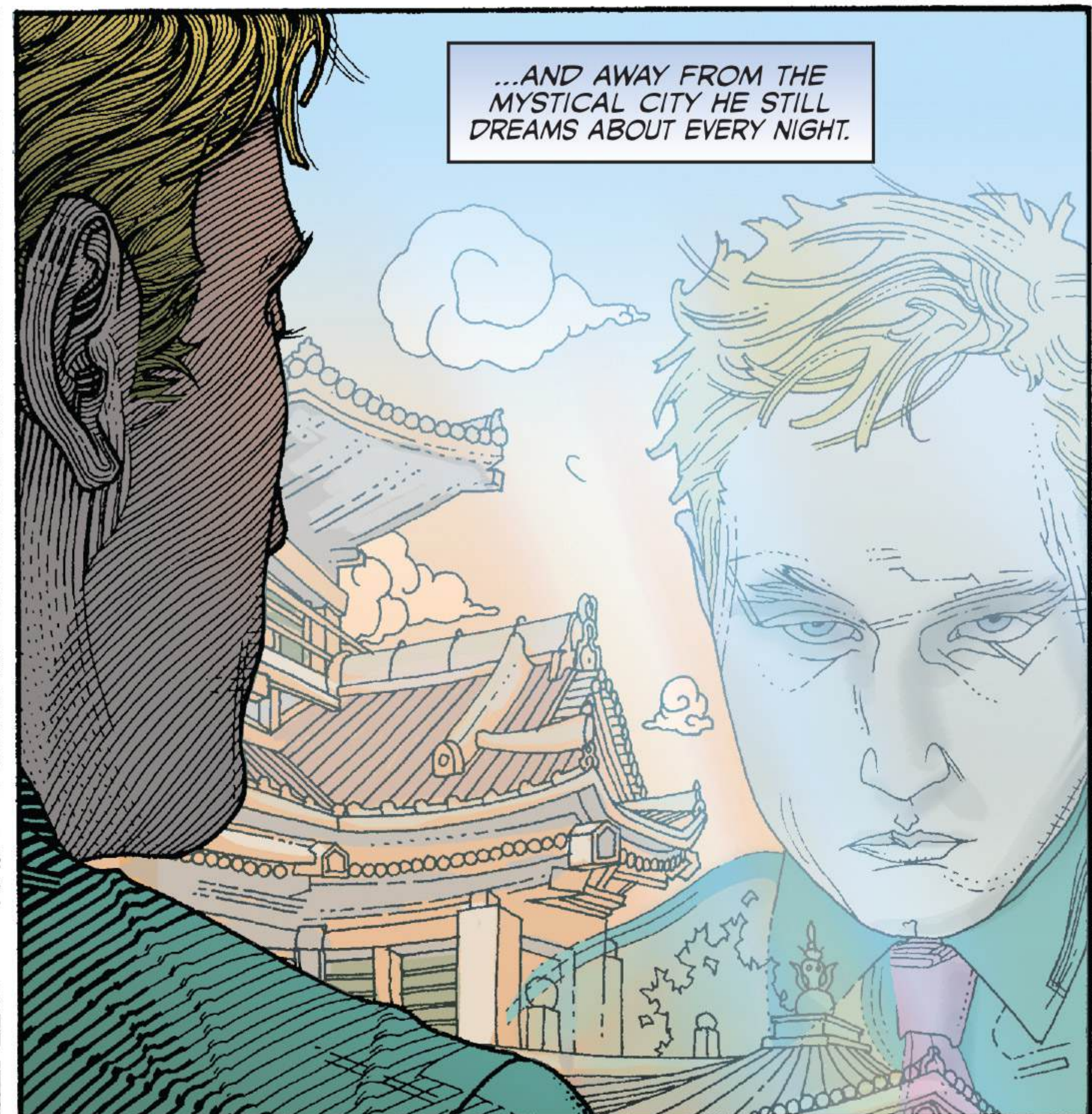
HE HATES
YELLING AT
DANNY.

EVERY MORNING
HE PROMISES
HIMSELF TO TRY
TO MAKE IT
THROUGH THE DAY
WITHOUT YELLING
AT HIS SON.

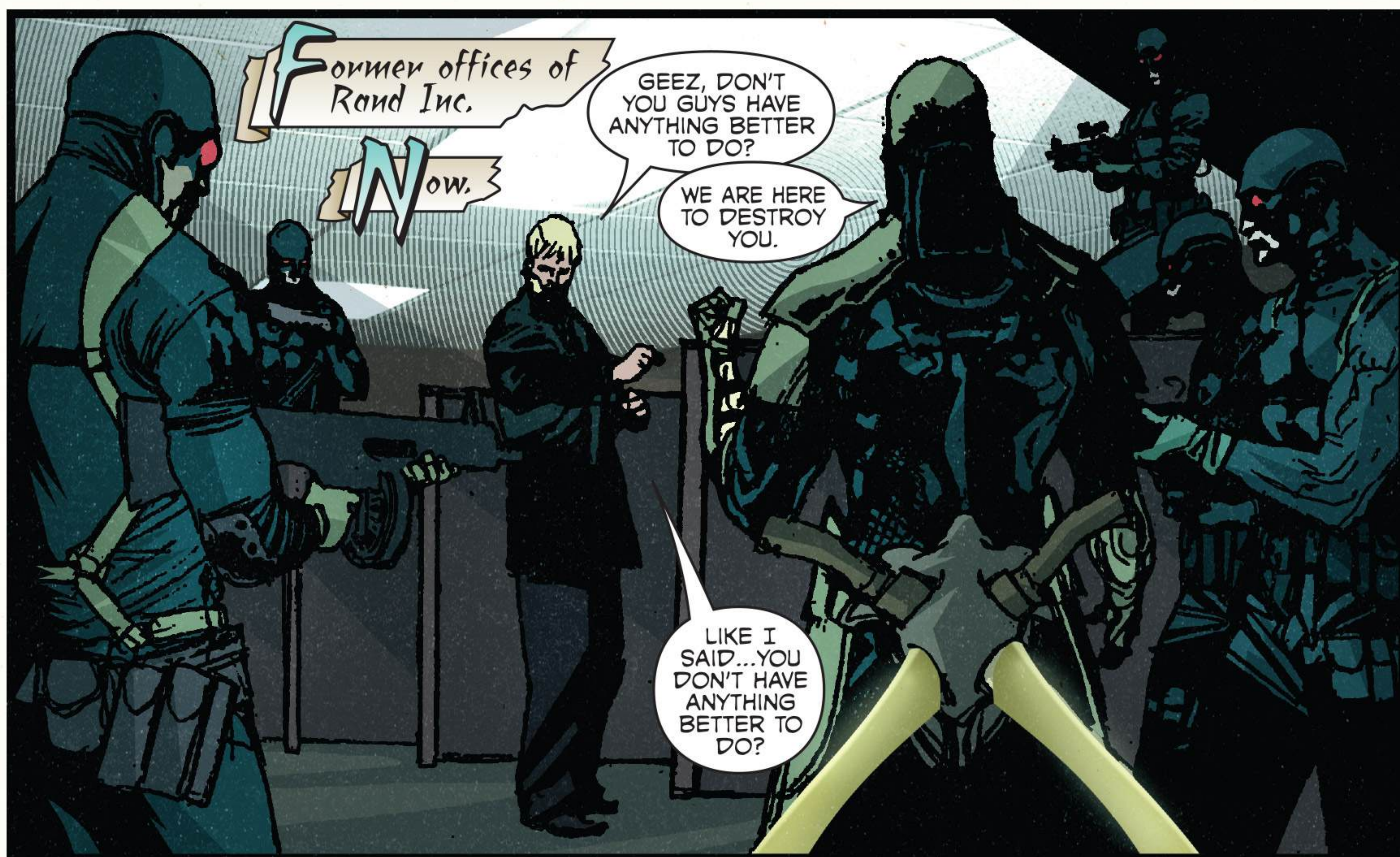


AND EVERY NIGHT--WHEN
HE REALIZES HE'S BROKEN THAT
PROMISE YET AGAIN--WENDELL
RAND WONDERS ABOUT THE
CHOICES HE'S MADE IN HIS LIFE.

THE CHOICES THAT TOOK HIM
HERE, TO THE SOUL-CRUSHING
BURDEN OF BUSINESS AND
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES...



...AND AWAY FROM THE
MYSTICAL CITY HE STILL
DREAMS ABOUT EVERY NIGHT.



Former offices of
Rand Inc.
Now.

GEEZ, DON'T
YOU GUYS HAVE
ANYTHING BETTER
TO DO?

WE ARE HERE
TO DESTROY
YOU.

LIKE I
SAID...YOU
DON'T HAVE
ANYTHING
BETTER TO
DO?



YOU WILL
PAY FOR YOUR
CRIMES AGAINST
XAO.

*Xao is their former
leader. He threw
himself to his death,
but not before telling
me about the
mysterious Eighth
City.*

*I guess I should
thank him for that.
Sort of.*



YOUR ENTIRE BUILDING
HAS BEEN FITTED WITH
EXPLOSIVES. THERE IS
NO ESCAPE.

SO WHY NOT
JUST BLOW THE
JOINT AND BE
DONE WITH IT?



NO. FIRST
YOU WILL BE
PUNISHED.
BEATEN.
HUMILIATED.

AND THEN
WE WILL **SEVER**
YOUR HANDS AND
KEEP THEM AS
TROPHIES.

SORRY--



--I'M
KIND OF
PARTIAL TO
THEM.



KRAK



DON'T WANT
YOU GUYS--



--USING
THEM AS
NIGHT-
LIGHTS--



--OR
SOMETHING.

This Hydra cell has
equipped itself with
serious firepower.

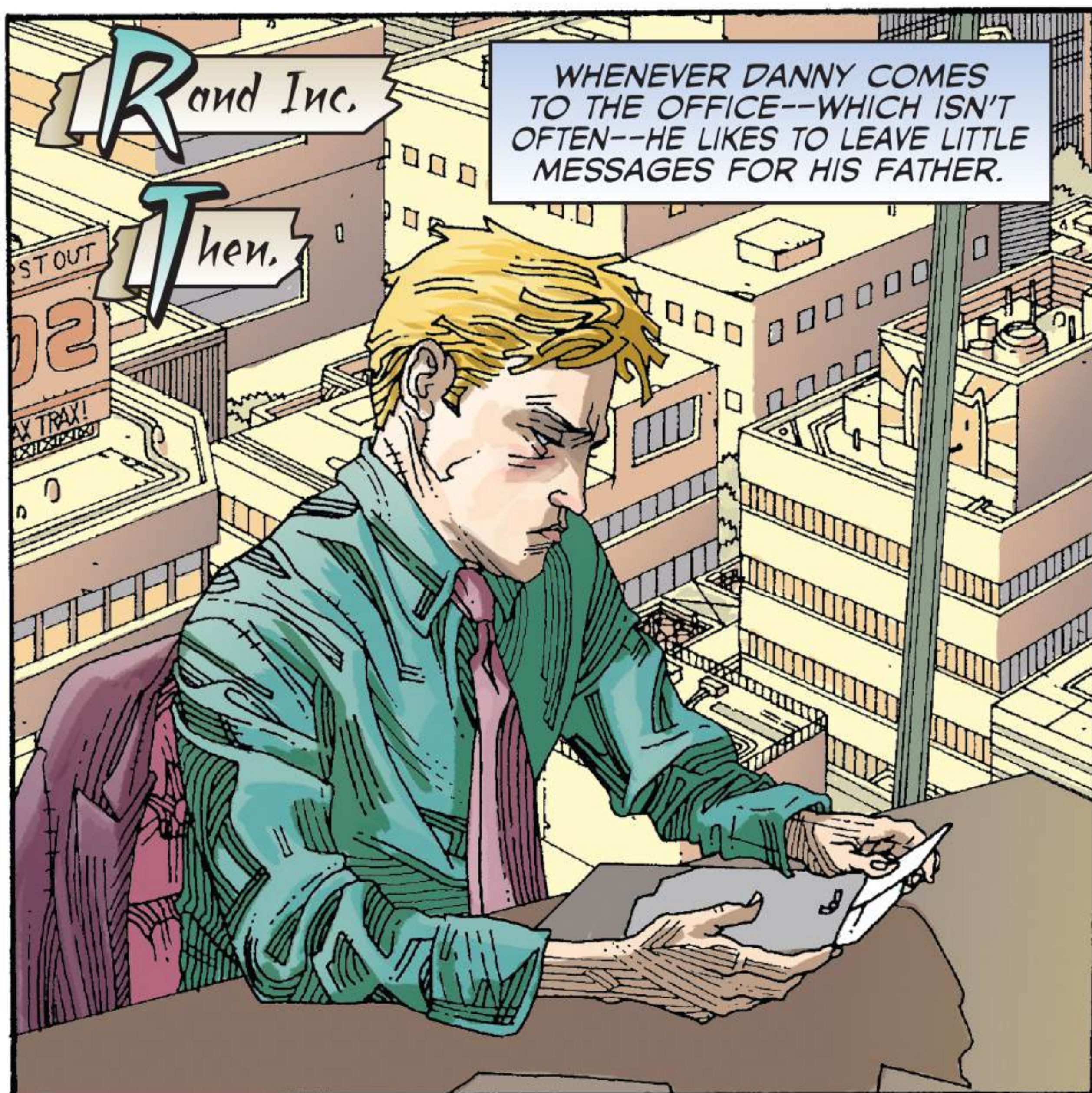
The concussive blasts
from those guns alone
make my head hurt.



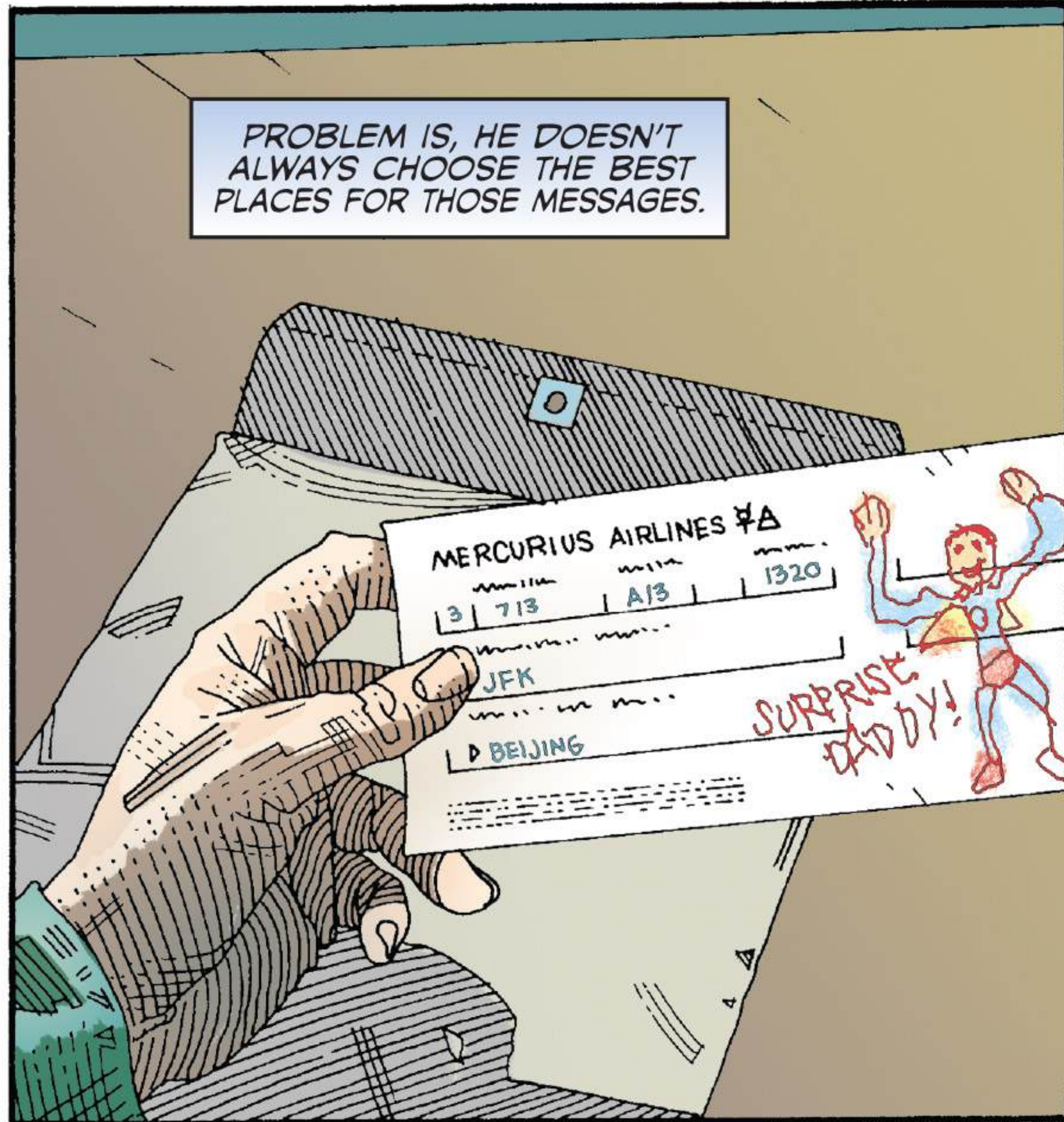
I'm not going to
be able to take
them alone.

Need to make
it to my dojo.

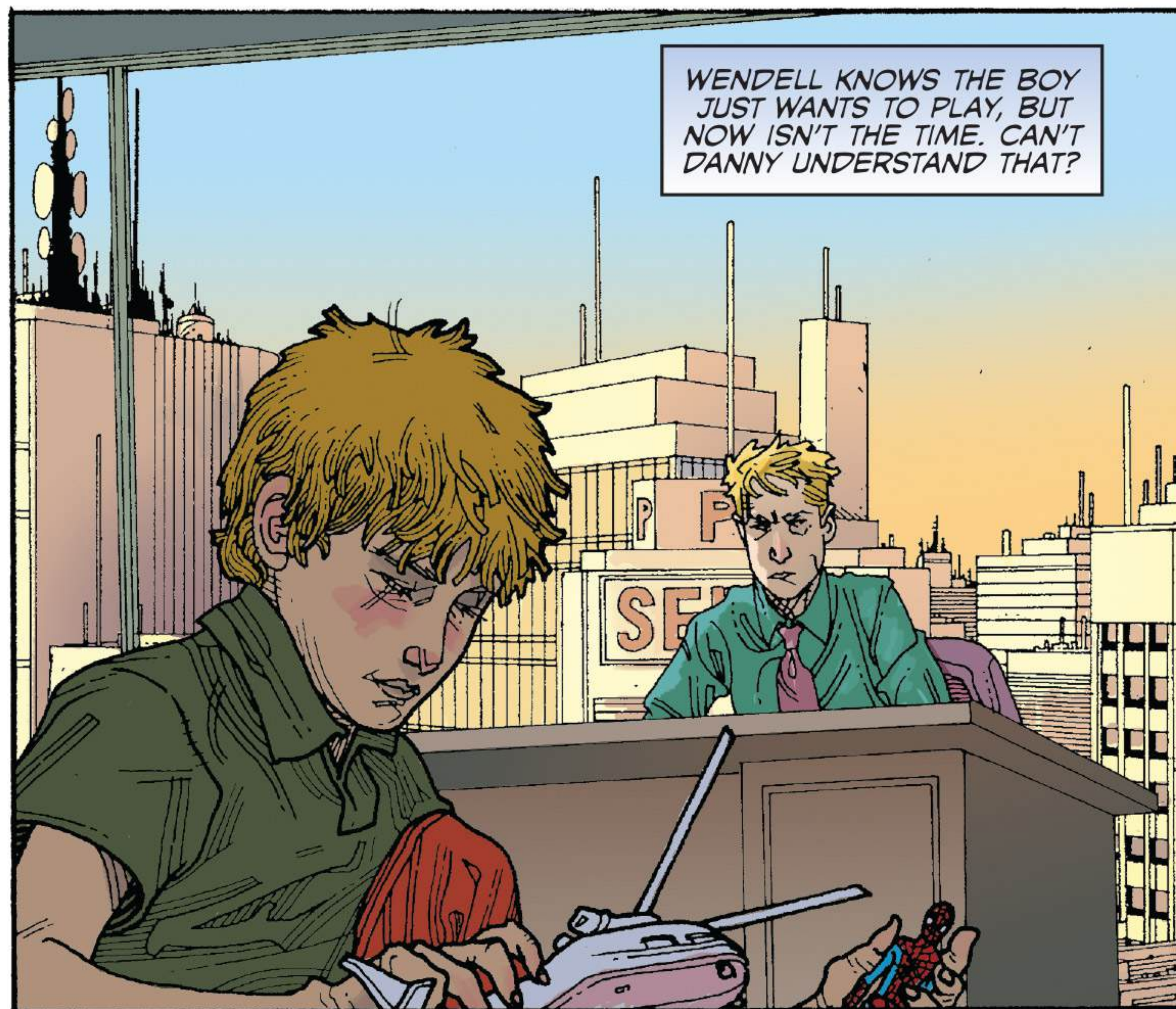
They may have cut
the building phone
lines, but I still have
another way to reach
Misty and Luke.



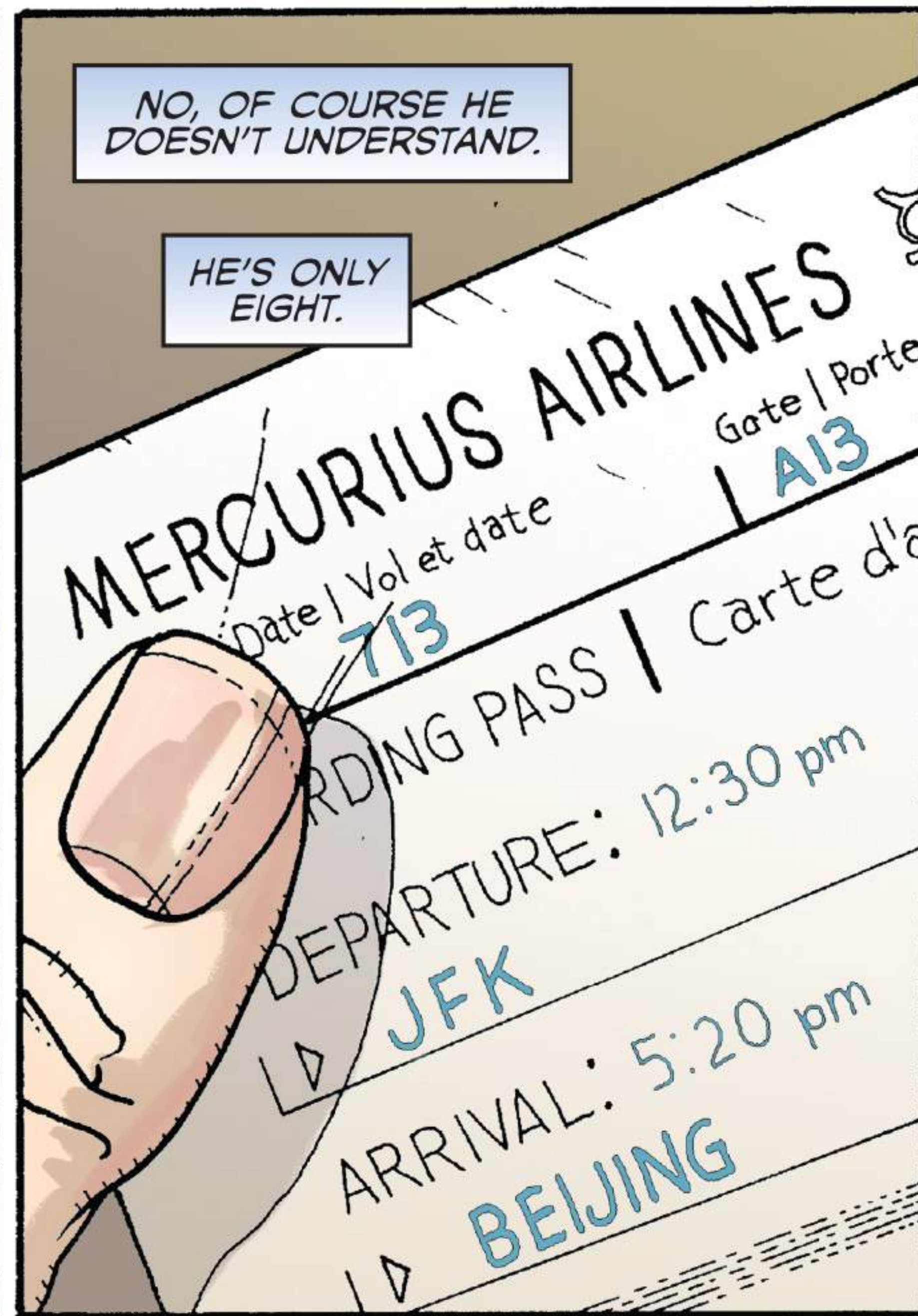
WHENEVER DANNY COMES TO THE OFFICE--WHICH ISN'T OFTEN--HE LIKES TO LEAVE LITTLE MESSAGES FOR HIS FATHER.



PROBLEM IS, HE DOESN'T ALWAYS CHOOSE THE BEST PLACES FOR THOSE MESSAGES.

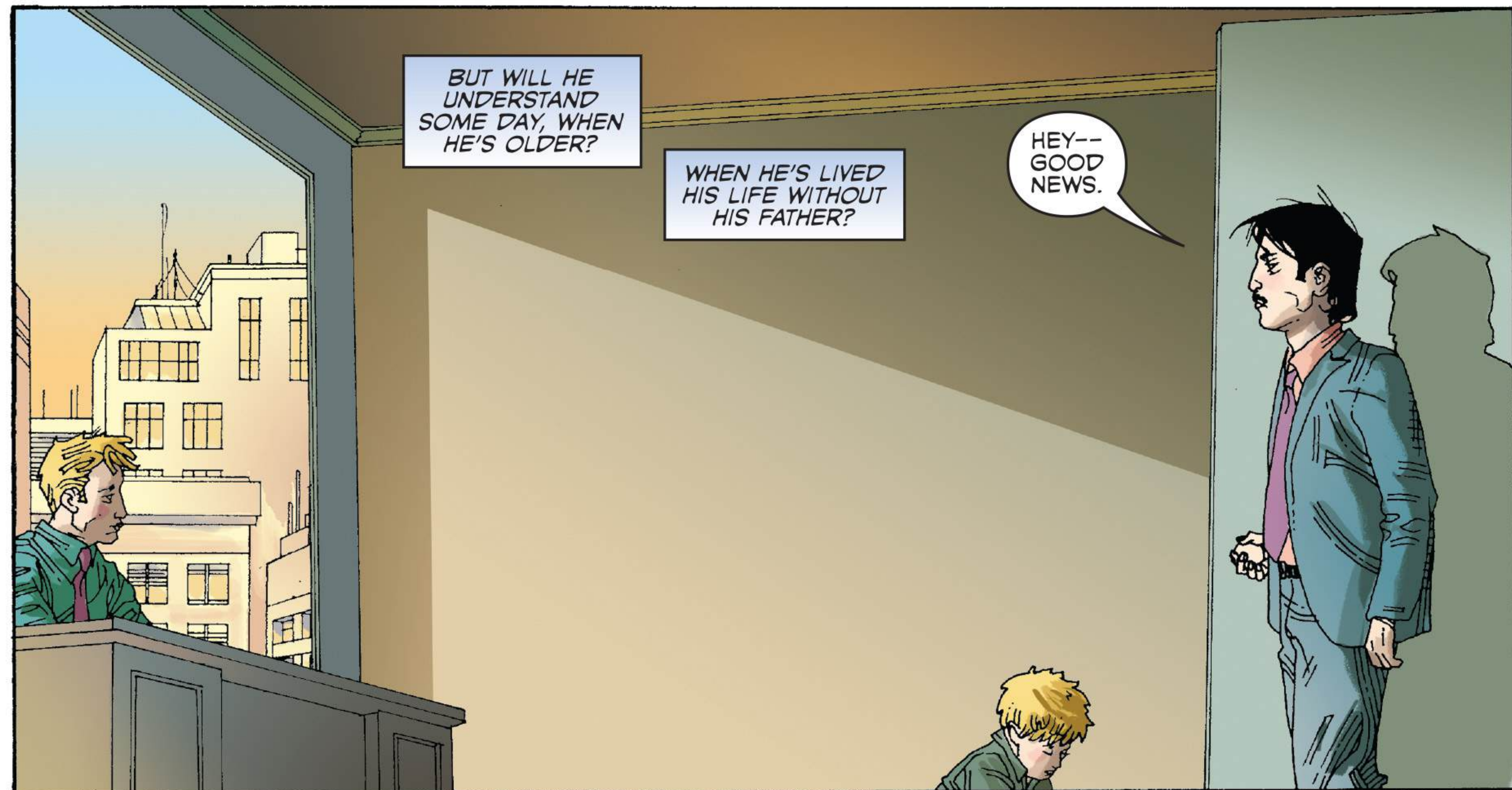


WENDELL KNOWS THE BOY JUST WANTS TO PLAY, BUT NOW ISN'T THE TIME. CAN'T DANNY UNDERSTAND THAT?



NO, OF COURSE HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.

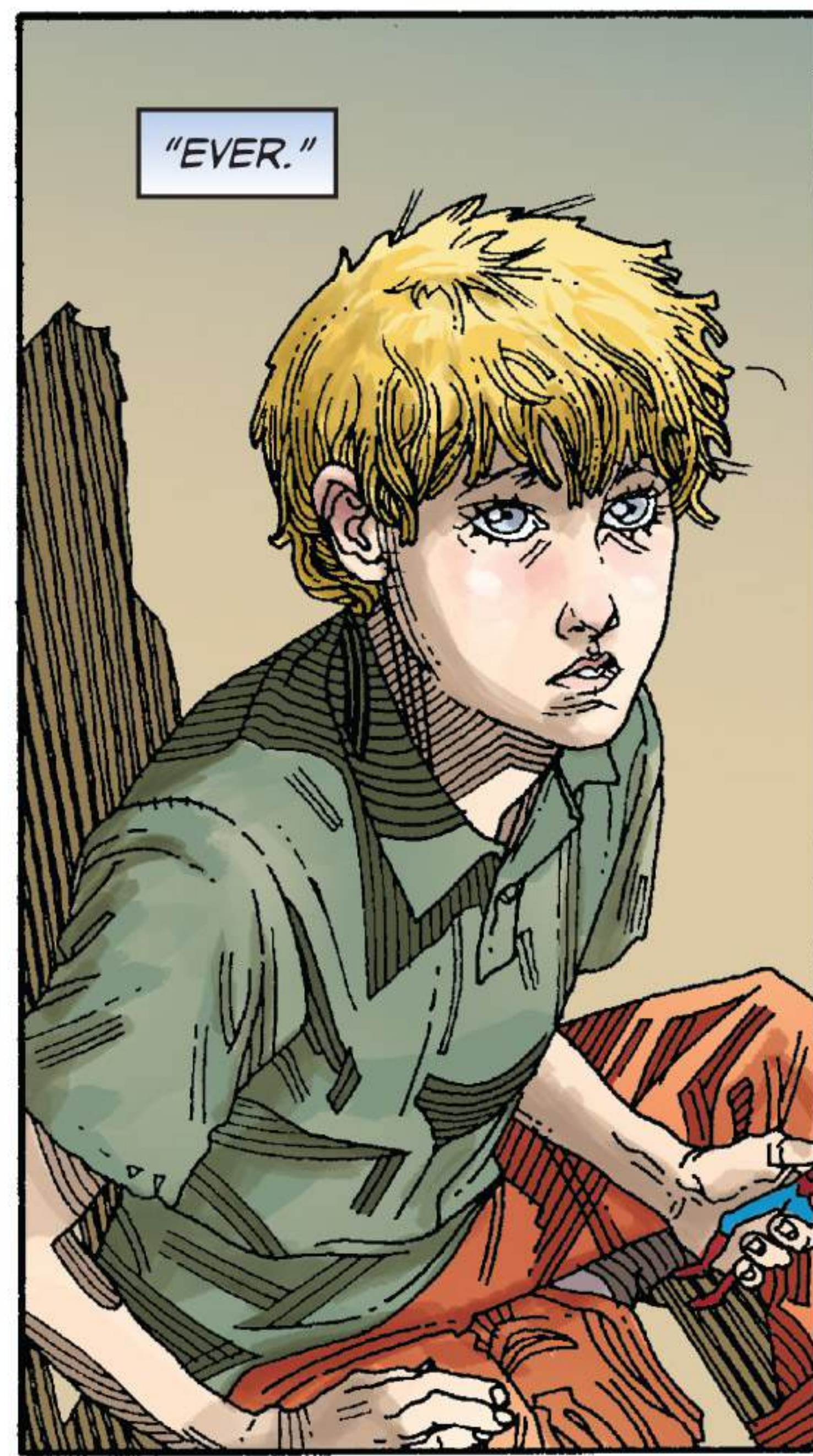
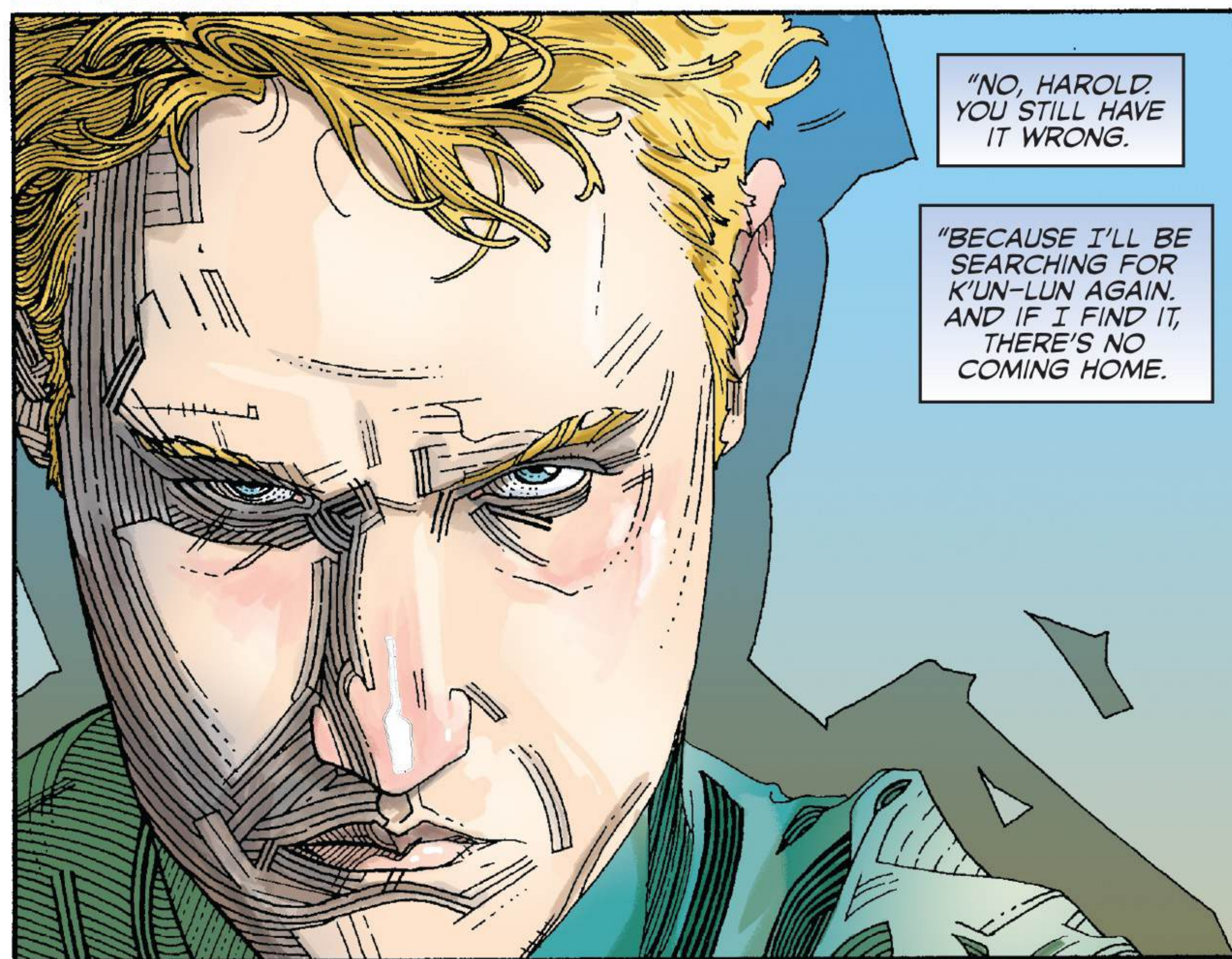
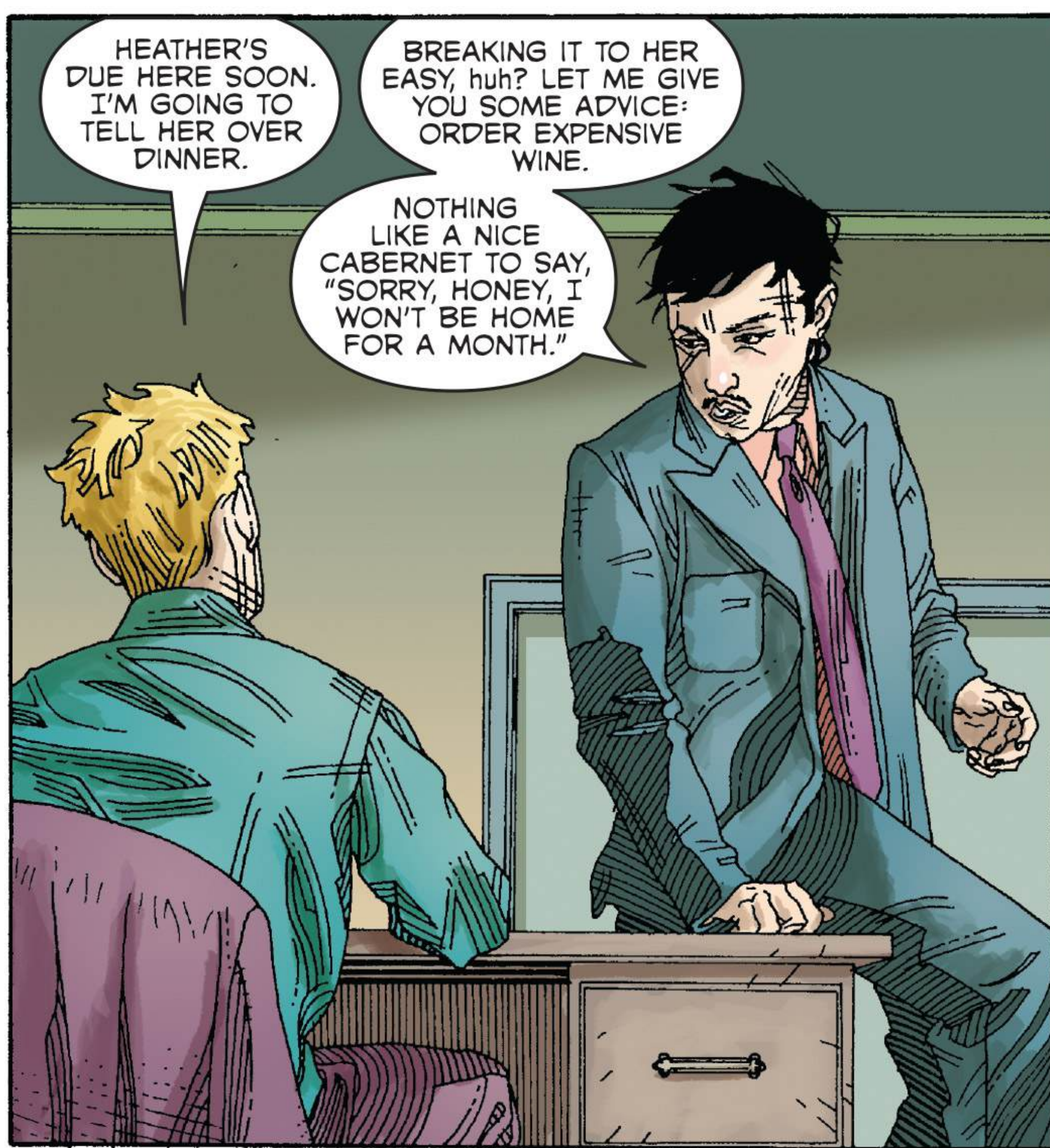
HE'S ONLY EIGHT.

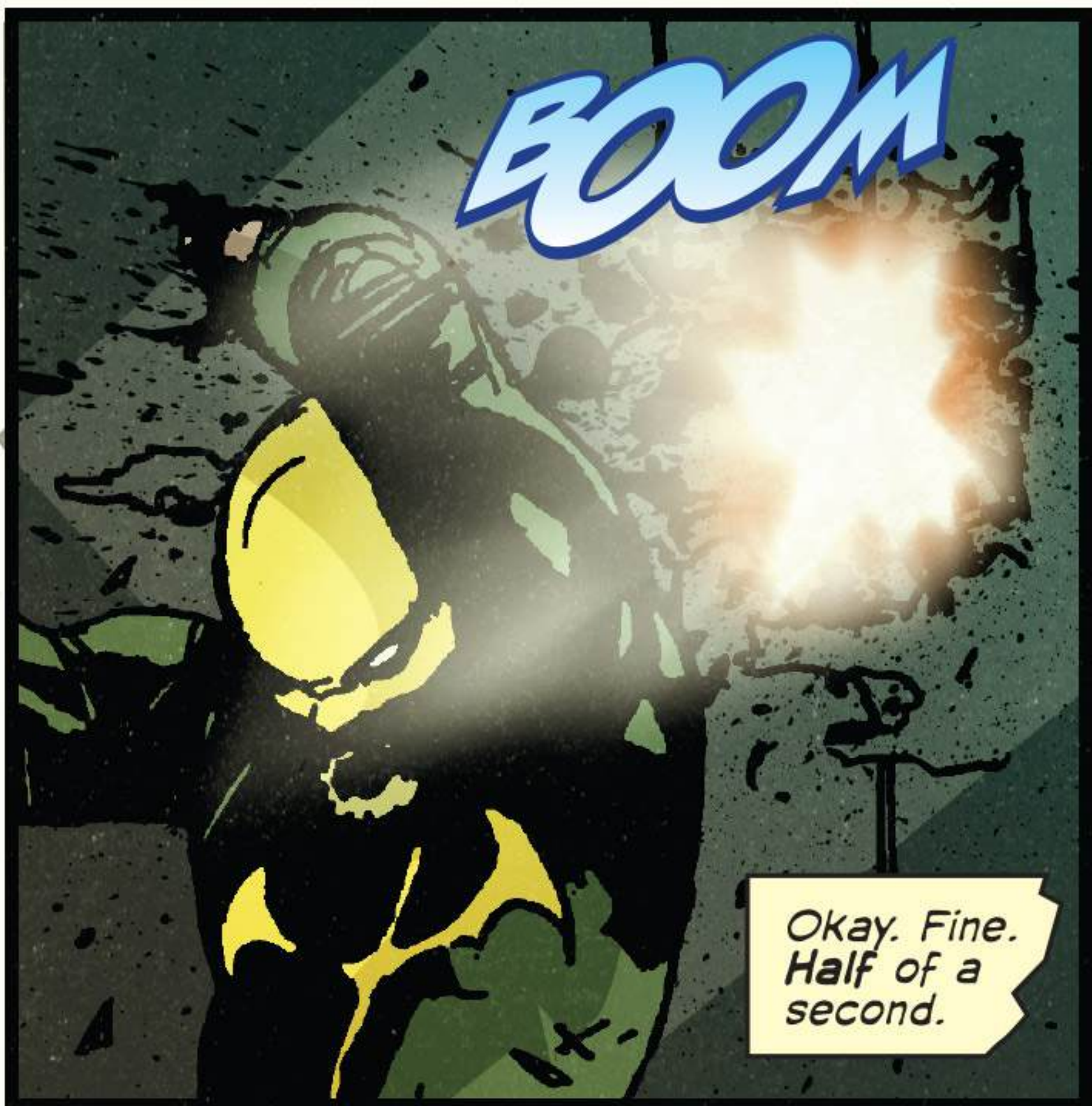
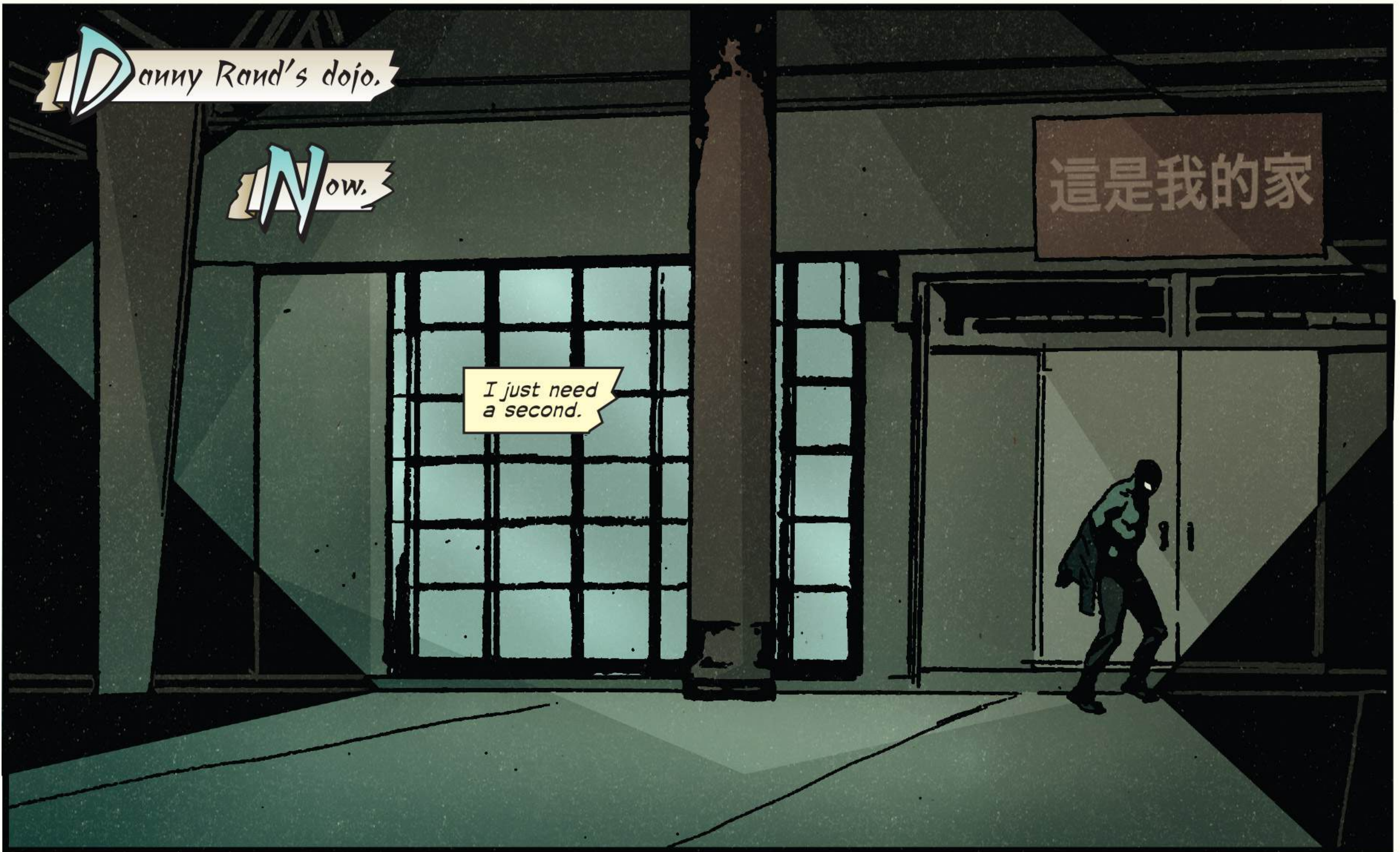


BUT WILL HE UNDERSTAND SOME DAY, WHEN HE'S OLDER?

WHEN HE'S LIVED HIS LIFE WITHOUT HIS FATHER?

HEY--GOOD NEWS.



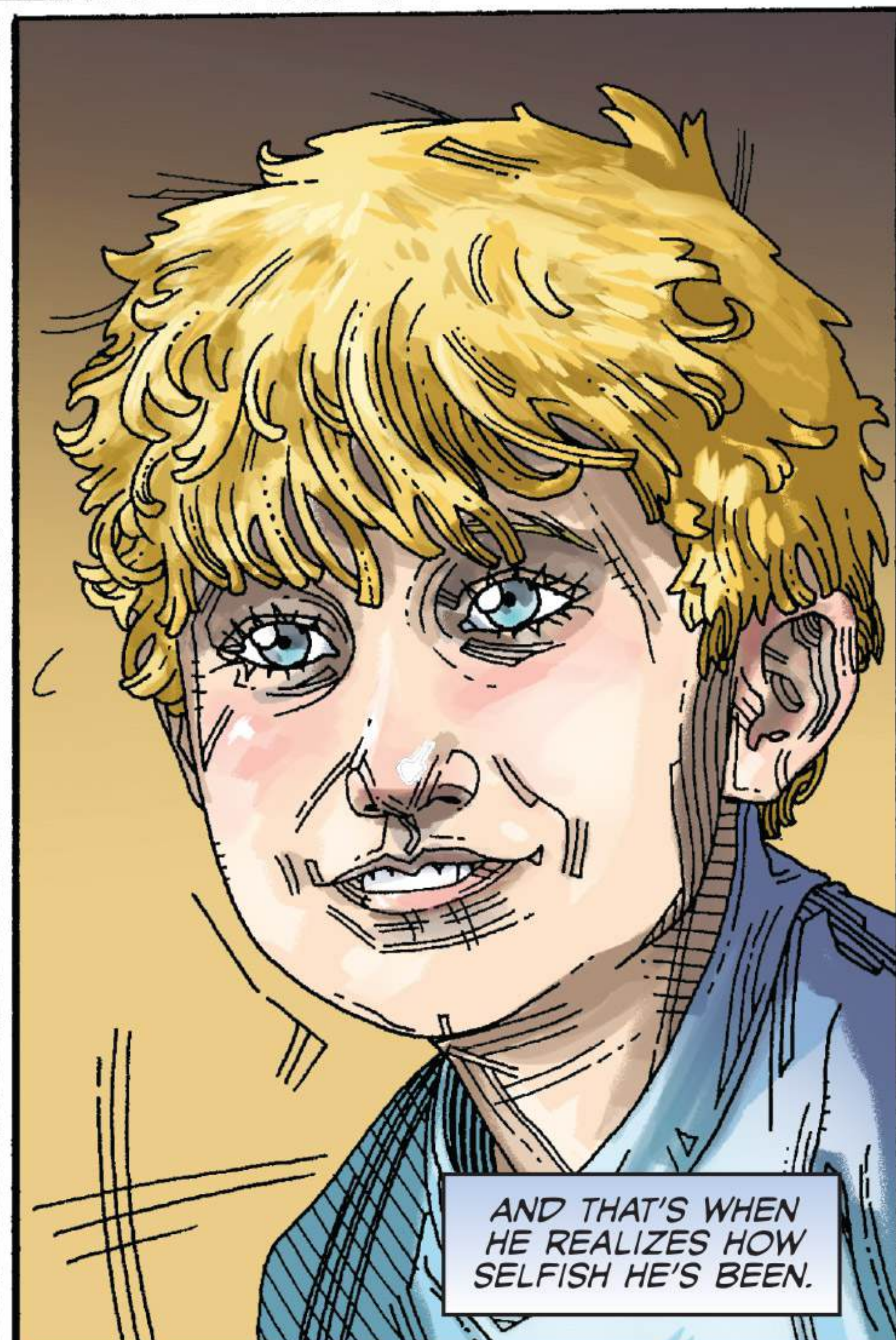
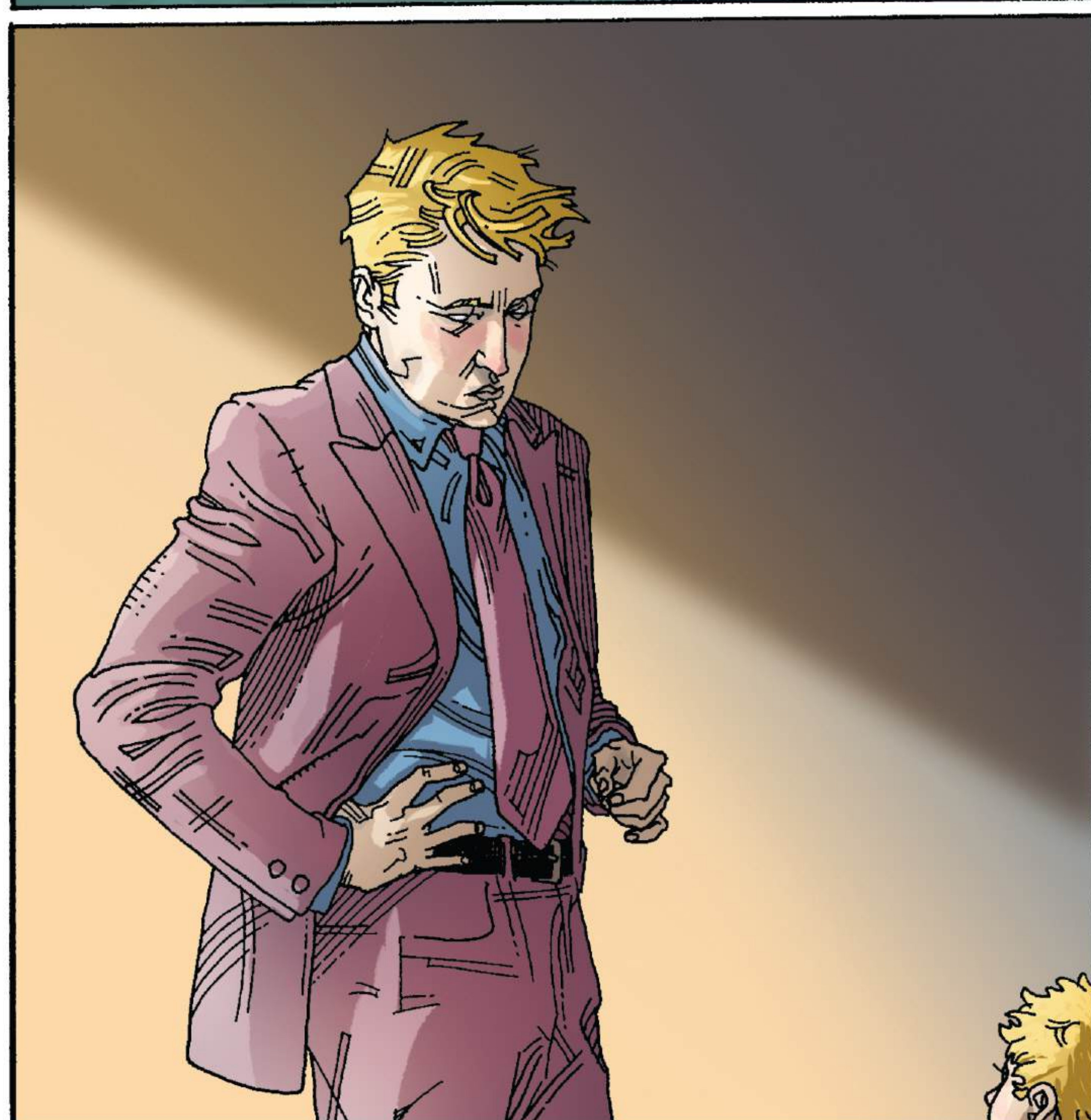
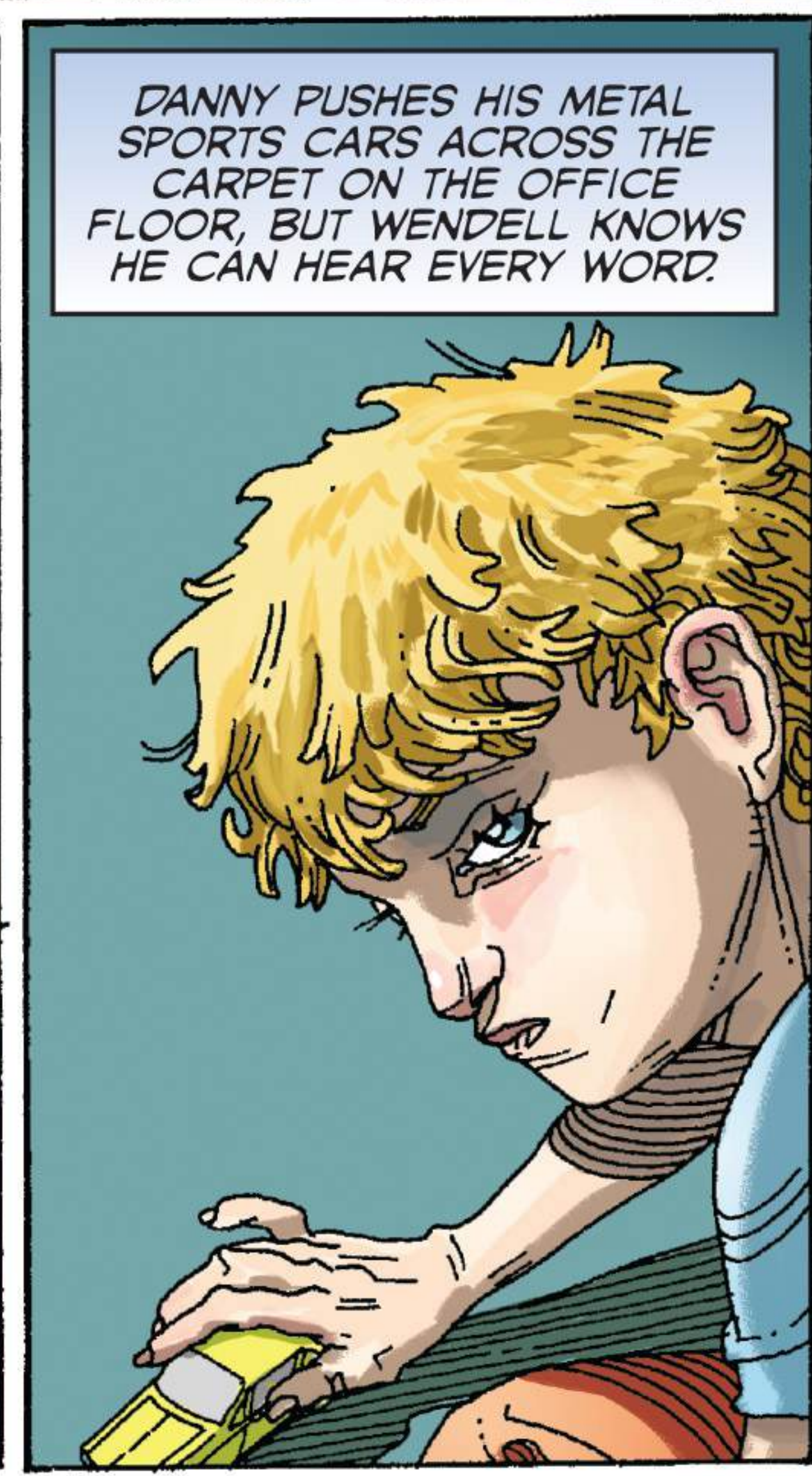
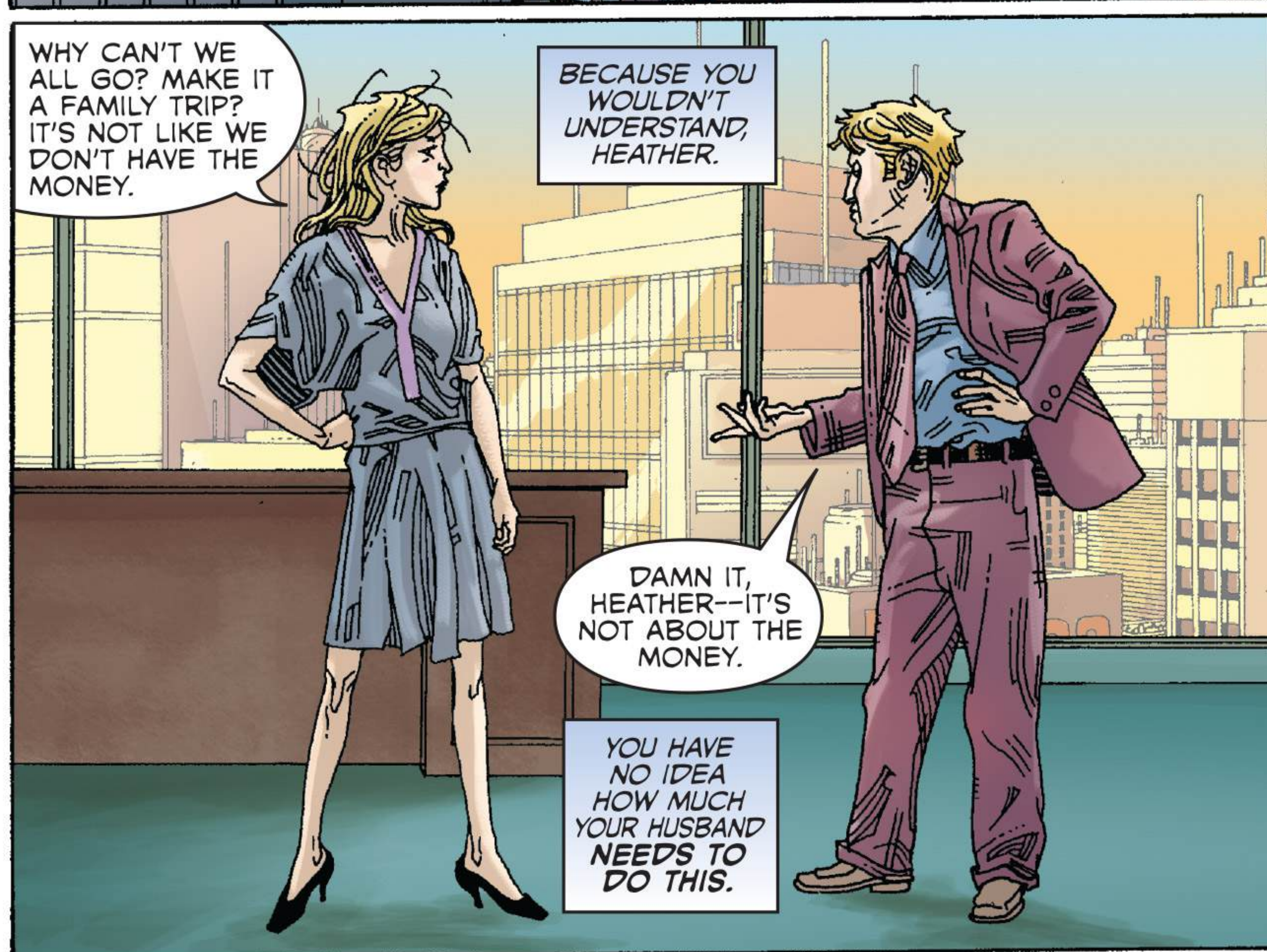




AS I
SAID, THERE
IS NO WAY
OUT.

WELCOME
HOME,
SUGAR.

beep
beep
beep
beep





The fragments of the communicator burn with the chi of the dragon Shou-Lao.

zzing
zzing
zzing

GAH!

TSS

TSS

TSS

TSS

For once, my aim's pretty damned good.

And now Misty knows exactly what to do.

KRAK

KRAK

So sorry, fellas.

I haven't broken out of Hell just to end up at the bottom of some terrorist cult's urinal.

Fighting alongside Misty is like sex--the rhythm, the thrusting, the hot skin, the blood slamming through your veins...

So right away, I can sense something's off with her.



ARE YOU HURT? YOU DON'T SEEM LIKE YOUR---

I'M FINE. TO YOUR RIGHT.



Yeah, yeah. I can tell she's holding back. Playing it cautious.

But why?

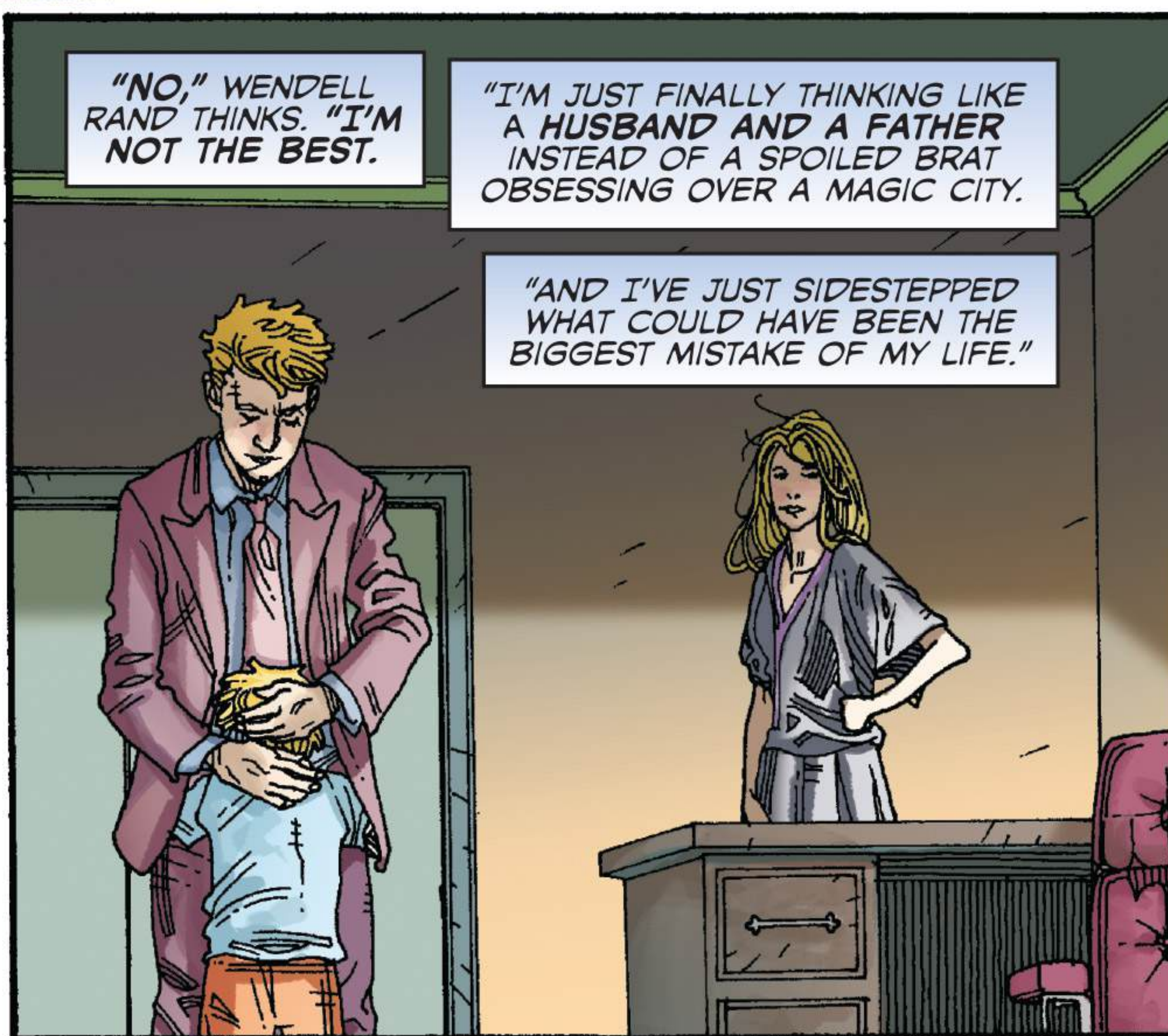
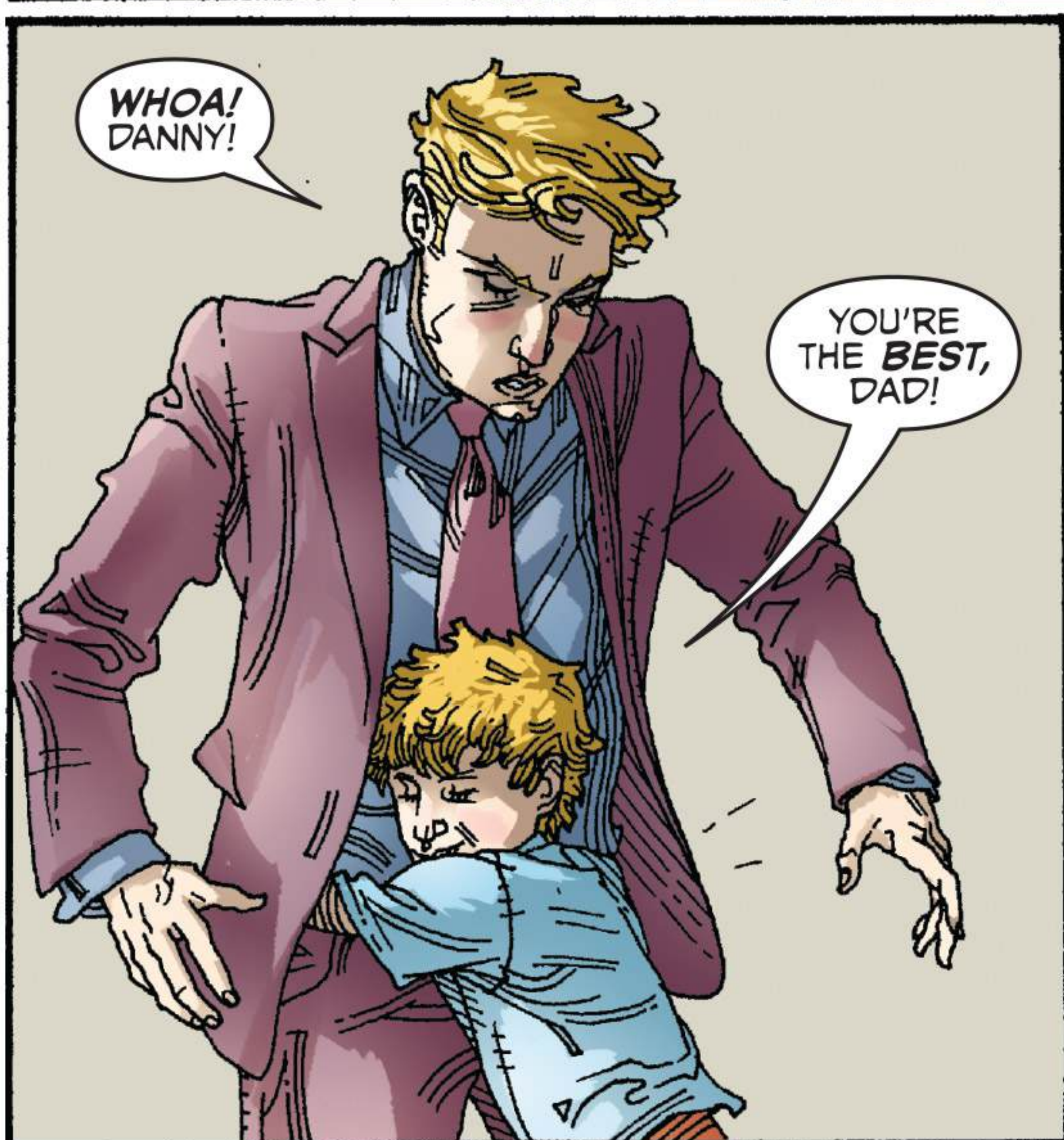
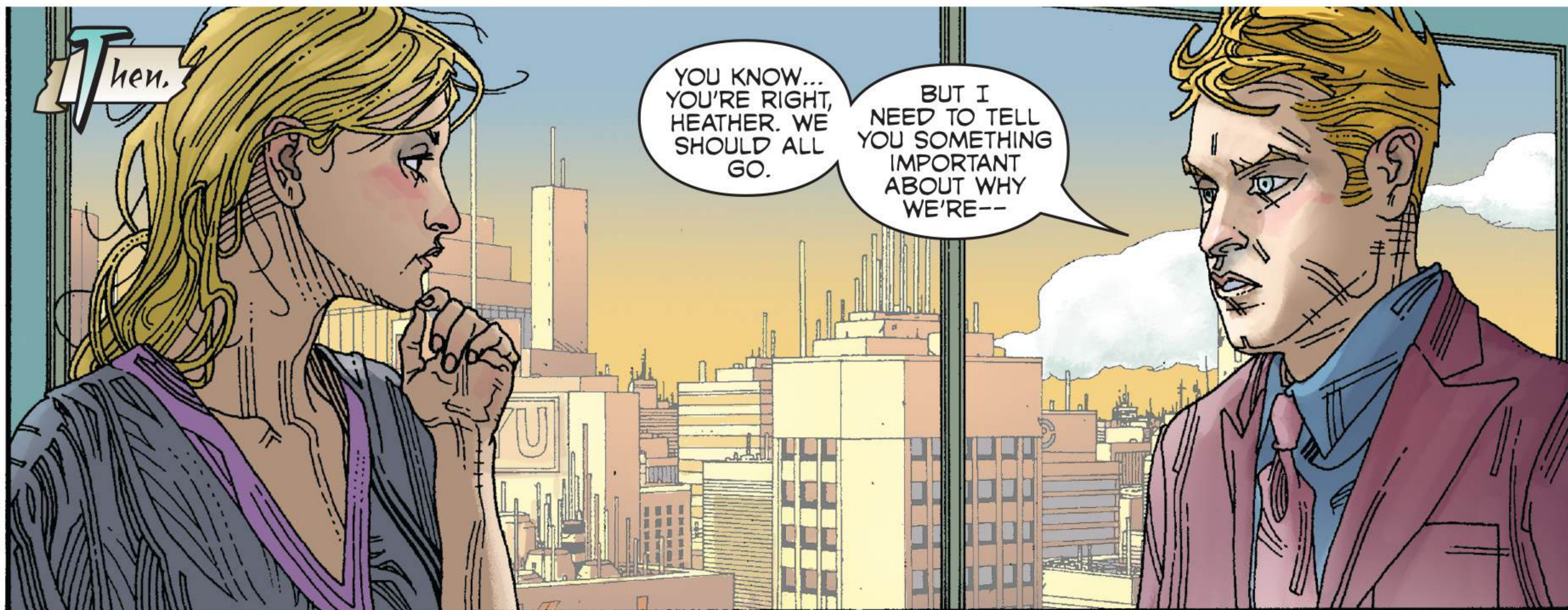


HANDS OR NOTHING... HANDS OR NOTHING...

...HAIL HYDRA.

BEEEEEP







Uh...WHAT'S
THAT ANNOYING
BEEPING
NOISE?

beep
beep
beep
beep



I CANNOT
RETURN WITHOUT
YOUR HANDS.

YOU WILL
GIVE THEM TO ME...
OR THESE **MECHA-
DESTROYERS** WILL
BRING YOUR
BUILDING DOWN
AROUND YOUR
HEADS.



DIDN'T
WE ALREADY
DO THIS?



YOU CANNOT
STOP THEM ALL,
DANNY RAND.

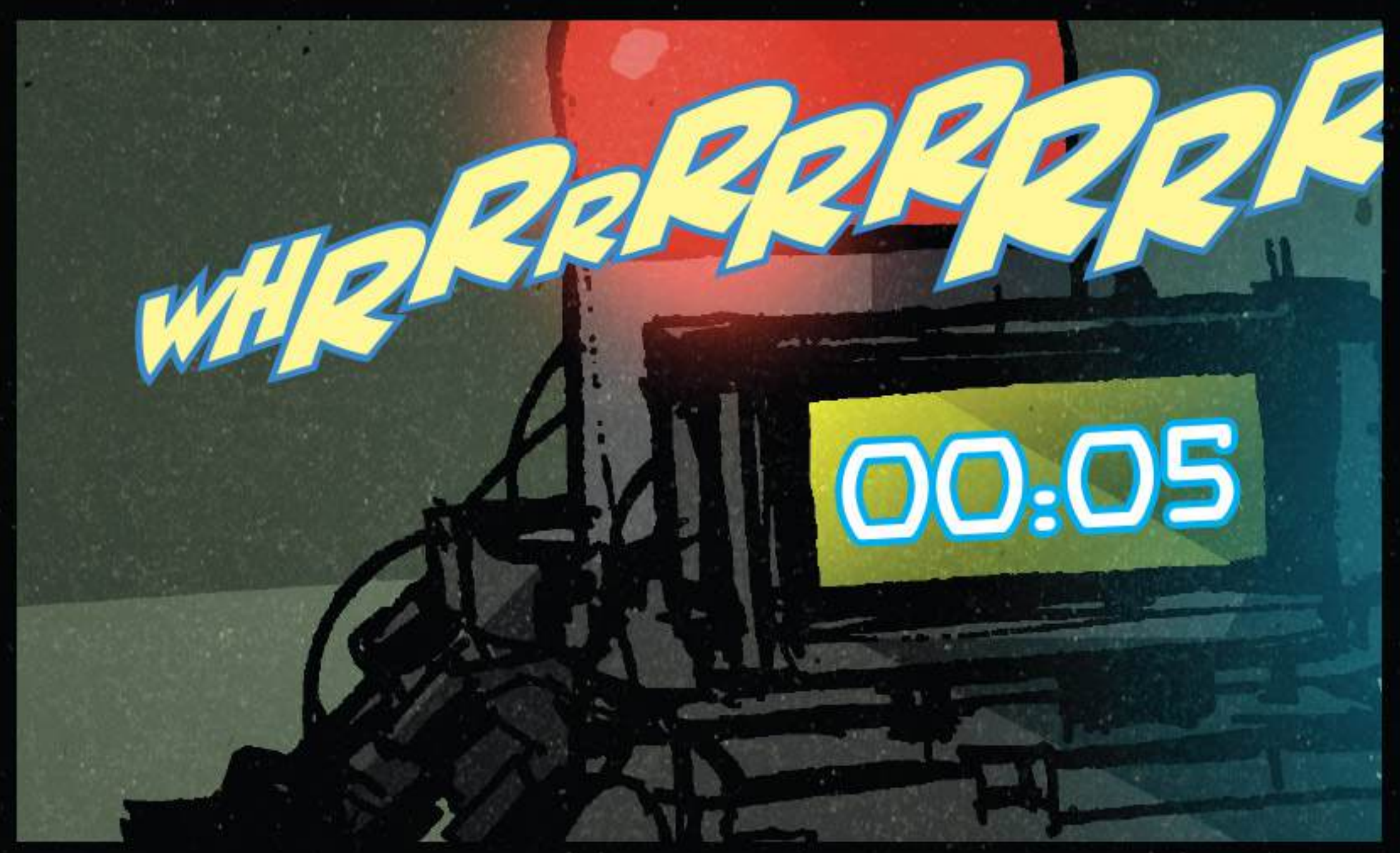
ACCEPT YOUR
FATE. HAIL HYDRA.
SURRENDER YOUR
HANDS...



HOW
ABOUT A
FOOT?



...OR
NOTHING.



WHRRRRRRRRRR

00:05

Misty tries to
stop the robots...

I AM **NOT**
JUMPING OUT OF
THIS BUILDING.

...but there's
not enough time.

00:03

RUN! JUMP!
NOW!

NO NO
NO NO
NO...

THROOM
THROOM
THROOM

We fall. She
reaches out
for me.

She's never
done that
before.



I'VE
GOT YOU.



KRUNCH

OOF!



I don't want
to turn around.
I don't want
to see.



But I do
anyway.

My father's legacy...
all of his work in this
world...burns.

One week later.



I KNEW YOU WANTED TO DOWNSIZE, BUT THIS...



Har-har.

LOOK, DANNY, ALL KIDDING ASIDE-- YOU'VE GOT A LITTLE LEFT. IT'S A FRACTION OF YOUR FORMER WEALTH, BUT...

...WELL, I'VE GOT SOMEWHERE SAFE YOU CAN PUT IT. LET IT GROW A LITTLE. EVEN IN THIS MARKET.



THANKS, BUT NO. CUT ME A CHECK.

I'M GOING TO PUT WHATEVER'S LEFT INTO THE SCHOOL OF THUNDER.

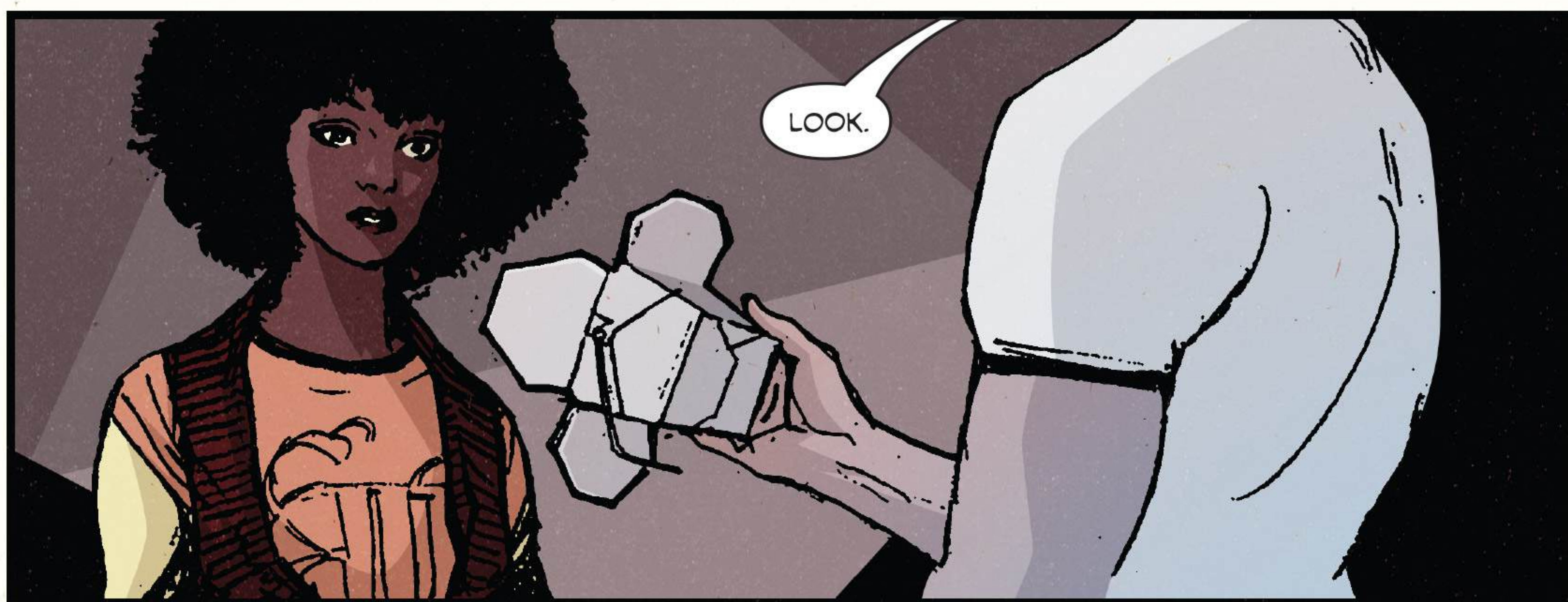


I HAD A FEELING YOU'D SAY THAT.

THE SCHOOL IS THE ONLY BUSINESS THAT MATTERS TO ME NOW, AND I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE IT UP.



"I NOTICED YOUR PENTHOUSE WAS ON THE MARKET. WHERE SHOULD I SEND THE CHECK?"



Shhh.
DON'T RUIN
THE MOMENT
BY SAYING
SOMETHING
STUPID.



SUGAR...
WHY ARE
YOU DOING
THIS?

BECAUSE
I LOVE YOU.



NO.
REALLY.

IS THERE ANOTHER
WAY TO SAY "BECAUSE
I LOVE YOU" THAT I'M
FORGETTING?

SO YOU
REALLY DON'T
KNOW...?

YOU'RE
NOT TRYING TO
DO SOME DUMB
**HONORABLE
THING?**



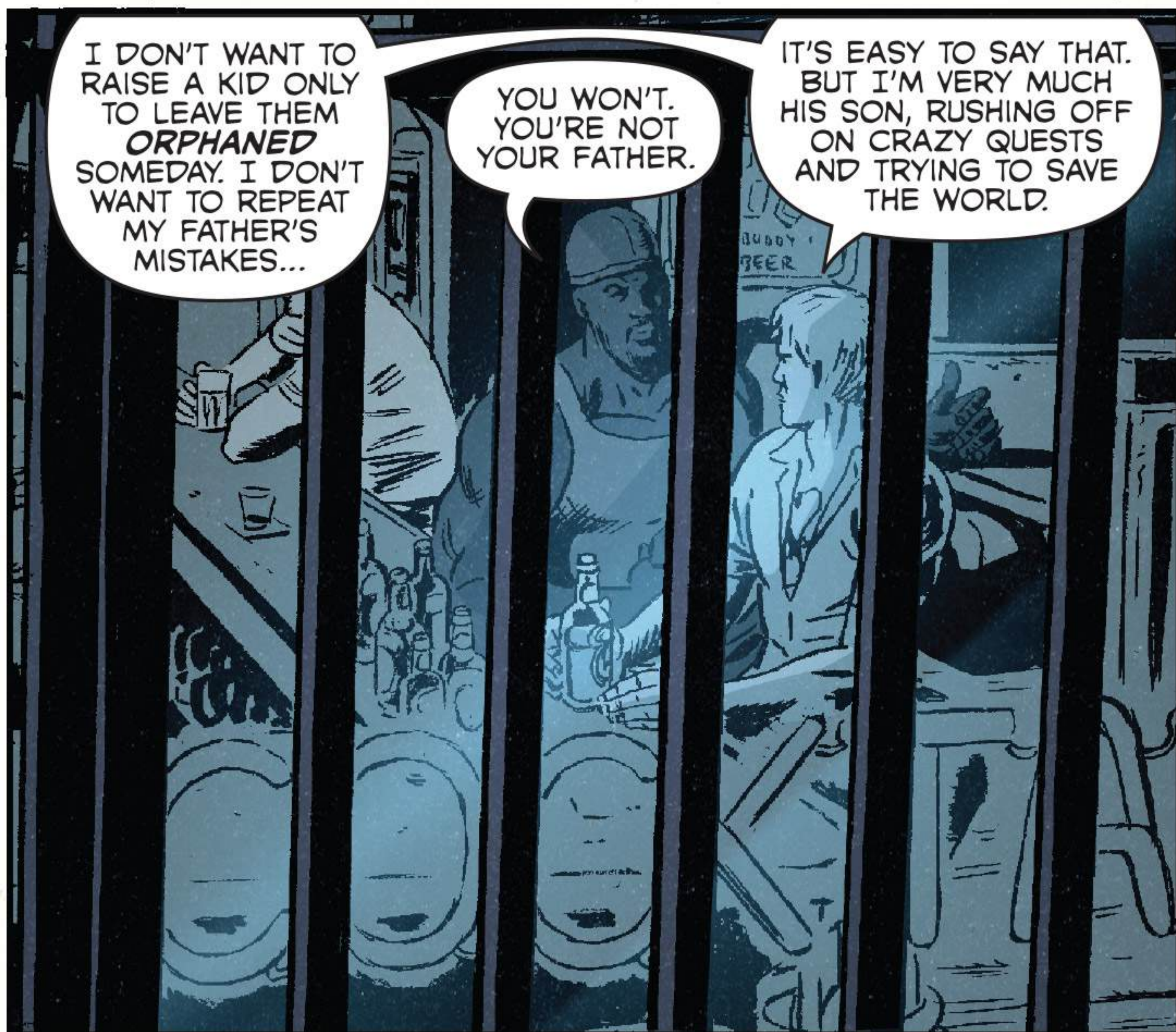
HONORABLE
THING...?

Oh GOD.
THE FIGHT.
THAT'S WHY
YOU WERE
HOLDING
BACK...



Oh,
BABY.





Harlem.
Tonight.

Out in the city in the middle of the night, I hear Luke's words in my head.

"HERE'S THE THING, DANNY--WHICH IS WHY I KNOW YOU WON'T SCREW UP BEING A DAD.

"YOU'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT YOUR GREATEST POWER WAS IN THOSE FISTS OF YOURS.

"BUT ACTUALLY, IT'S IN YOUR **HEART**. YOU'D SOONER DIE THAN FAIL YOUR CHILD."

Exactly, Luke.

Just like my father before me.

The End of this Book of the Iron Fist.

ESCAPE FROM THE EIGHTH CITY...ESCAPE FROM HELL!

K'un-Lun is the majestic city of otherworldly kung-fu champions, the spiritual home of the Iron Fist and a repository of centuries-old wisdom. But for many of those centuries, K'un-Lun's leaders have used the Eighth City — a secret plane with only one way in and no way out — as a dumping ground...to offload their murderers, monsters and demons.

But as Danny Rand has just learned, it has also been the prison of K'un-Lun's political prisoners. And this is a historical shame that cannot stand. The current regime of K'un-Lun has sent Rand and his band of immortal fighters from the Seven Cities to recover the political prisoners — including perhaps the very *first* Iron Fist — but it is a death mission for which there may be no return...or salvation!

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Collecting *Immortal Iron Fist* #21-27.

MARVEL

T+

